

LaFleur noted some state officials had expressed a "lack of trust in FERC solutions."

That comes as New York state Democrats hammered Gov. Andrew Cuomo's top energy officials Monday about a nuclear subsidy for upstate plants, questioning its \$1 billion cost in the first two years, whether enough alternatives were considered and why downstate ratepayers are footing the bill, POLITICO New York's Marie J. French [reports](#).

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and LCV President Gene Karpinski was the first of many to identify Chris Dudley as the NBA player-turned Republican Oregon gubernatorial nominee. For today: What former professional basketball player later chaired the House Natural Resources Committee? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

GUIDE TO FEDERAL BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS: The federal budget process is complicated; brush up on your knowledge so you're ready to act as the budget winds its way through Congress. [Download your guide](#).

HEARING TO TARGET 'WORST OF THE WORST' OBAMA LAND, SEA GRABS: Ranchers, lumber companies and commercial fishing operations will all be watching closely this morning when a House Natural Resources Committee panel paints a bull's eye on what Chairman [Rob Bishop](#)'s office describes as the "worst of the worst" examples of President Barack Obama's "excessive use" of the Antiquities Act to lock up more than 550 million acres of land and water with national monument designations. Among the areas to get attention: Bears Ears, in Bishop's home state of Utah; Katahdin Woods and Waters in Maine; Cascade-Siskiyou in Southern Oregon and Northern California; and Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine Monument off the coast of New England.

The [event](#), which will feature four witnesses, including Maine Gov. Paul LePage, builds off President Donald Trump's [executive order](#) to have Interior review two dozen national monuments created since Jan. 1, 1996. It kicks off at 10 a.m. in Longworth 1324. [Here's](#) a background memo.

Groups oppose any rollbacks: An eclectic group of 450 organizations, ranging from the NAACP to Patagonia to the Center for American Progress, is sending a [letter](#) today to Trump, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross urging them to oppose "any efforts to remove or decrease protections for any national monuments." They'll present it at a 9:30 a.m. press conference held by House Natural Resources Ranking Member [Raul Grijalva](#) ahead of the hearing.

OOPS: Trump's EPA team appears to have left up the agency's climate change page in Spanish, after removing the English-language version as part of a larger overhaul announced Friday night. Link [here](#) and [a screenshot](#) if it goes away.

AND... WE'RE OFF! Speaking at a Consumer Energy Alliance event in Houston, Zinke signed a [secretarial order](#) Monday directing BOEM to start a review of the agency's five-year plan for

offering oil and gas leases in federally controlled waters, Pro's Esther Whieldon reports. "We're going to look at everything," Zinke said of the review, which he said previously could take two years. He also complied with Trump's directive to review the well control rule for offshore drilling.

Ally nabs new Interior position: Zinke announced Vincent DeVito, the treasurer of his former congressional leadership PAC, would be in charge of coordinating the agency's energy policies across its nine bureaus, Esther reports. "We have to look at ourselves through to make sure we're streamlined and our regulations aren't arbitrary," Zinke said. It's a newly created position that will not require Senate confirmation.

For your radar: Zinke is delivering remarks at 9:15 a.m. at the National Tribal Energy Summit at the JW Marriott Washington.

BEACHHEAD MEMBER GETS BIGGER DOE ROLE: Daniel Simmons, a former vice president for policy at the libertarian-leaning IER, today becomes acting assistant secretary for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Pro's Darius Dixon reports. Simmons can only hold the position on a temporary basis without being nominated and confirmed by the Senate.

MAIL CALL! LET'S HATCH A PLAN, MR. PRUITT: Four Senate EPW Democrats — Tom Carper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Ed Markey and Jeff Merkley — sent a letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt Monday seeking documents concerning the administrator's decision last week to pull out of an Oklahoma Republican Party gala. They also asked Pruitt to describe what steps he'll take to comply with the Hatch Act, which aims to stop federal workers from politicking while on duty, going forward.

SCHUMER HIGHLIGHTS EPA PROTECTION IN OMNIBUS: Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer touted two key Democratic omnibus victories Monday: the preservation of 99 percent of EPA's budget "so their quest to keep our water and air clean will be able to continue" and the permanent extension of health benefits for coal miners. He praised West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin as "relentless, even after disappointment after disappointment, at holding the Senate's feet to the fire and making sure this was done." Speaking of which, ME's never seen anything quite like this before: A letter from Speaker Paul Ryan praising Rep. David McKinley for his "relentless" efforts at securing the compromise.

DRINKING WATER VIOLATIONS ARE DE RIGUEUR: Roughly a quarter of all Americans are served by drinking water systems that violated federal drinking water standards in 2015, according to a report out later today from the Natural Resources Defense Council. The report, which calls for greater enforcement and investment in the drinking water sector, found nearly 80,000 violations at systems across the country, with small, rural systems accounting for more than half of those.

No cop on the beat: As last year's failure in Flint, Mich., illustrated, EPA and states are loath to penalize water systems that violate the law. The NRDC report found that nine out of 10 violations were faced no formal action, and just 3.3 percent resulted in financial penalties.

COMMENTS READY? EPA's water office will hold a 3-hour-long virtual public listening session today as it solicits suggestions for regulations to scrap, change or replace. With two weeks left until the formal comment deadline, more than 35,000 public comments have rolled in to the docket.

SEE YOU IN COURT! A group of children seeking to force the federal government to take drastic action on climate change should be allowed to make their case in court, a magistrate judge assisting with the case recommended Monday. As Pro's Alex Guillén reports, the Trump administration asked a federal district court judge in March to allow the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals to consider tossing the case before it went to trial before her. District Court Judge Ann Aiken must now decide whether to agree with Magistrate Judge Thomas Coffin's recommendation or give her blessing to the Trump administration's early appeal effort.

WORK BEGINS ON COAL ASH GUIDANCE: EPA is currently working on the needed guidance to review and approve states' coal ash permitting programs, Administrator Scott Pruitt wrote in a letter to Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval. As Pro's Alex Guillén reports, a December water infrastructure package included a coal ash compromise that shifted permitting responsibilities to the states, which must first get EPA approval of their programs' broad contours, while the agency gained more enforcement powers and other concessions.

DID YA GET THAT MEMO? Sen. Claire McCaskill sent a letter to Energy Secretary Rick Perry seeking information about how his agency is addressing concerns raised in a GAO report about its ability to identify and prevent contracting fraud. "Oversight challenges with management of fraud risk and improper payments exist across the DOE complex," she wrote. "It is apparent that the risk is actually unknown because DOE does not adequately assess or oversee it." The Energy Department "generally concurred" with a series of the GAO recommendations, but nevertheless rated its fraud risk as "low" and disagreed with a number of the report's conclusions.

STATES RATE TOP ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH NEEDS: Top environmental and public health challenges for states include water quality, remediation of contaminated sites, and nutrient and nonpoint water contamination, according to a survey of state needs released Monday by the Environmental Council of the States.

RECORDS SOUGHT OF NOAA CHAT RECORDS: The Cause of Action Institute has filed a FOIA request seeking NOAA employee communications during a recent New England Fishery Management Council meeting April 18-20. "CoA Institute is concerned that NOAA may be unlawfully destroying records of these communications," the request said. That's because it appears certain Google Chat records may not have been retained. The FOIA marks the latest attempt to seek records of chat communications from federal employees.

McKIBBEN GETS ACADEMIC TREATMENT: There's now a full-length academic paper looking at the role of Bill McKibben on the U.S. climate debate. It concludes that while divestment itself achieved "little traction," previously marginalized liberal policy ideas "gained increased attention and legitimacy."

Meanwhile, the Independent Petroleum Association of America is promoting another paper that attempts to quantify the costs of divestment to students and faculty at both public and private institutions.

MOVER, SHAKER: Christopher Smith, former assistant secretary for fossil energy at DOE under President Obama, has been named Baker Institute Advisory Board Fellow in Energy Studies at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy.

QUICK HITS

- 50 percent of US coal jobs are in just 25 counties. Quartz.
- Britain's energy supply is in jeopardy after Brexit, warn MPs. Guardian.
- Top Ethics Officer Challenges Trump Over Secret Waivers for Ex-Lobbyists. New York Times.
- Unions praise McConnell for deal to fix health benefits of retired miners. Lexington Herald-Leader.
- Big short position on biofuels generated profit for Icahn's refiner. Reuters.
- Oil Price Optimism Wears Off as Texas Wildcatters Drill On. Bloomberg.

HAPPENING TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. — "Consequences of Executive Branch Overreach of the Antiquities Act," House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands, 1324 Longworth

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on federal lands, 366 Dirksen

12:00 p.m. — "Nuclear for the Next Generation," The Nuclear Energy Institute and Partnership for Global Security, National Press Club, 529 14th St. NW

12:00 p.m. — Alston & Bird panel on pharmaceutical waste, 950 F Street NW

1:00 p.m. — "Tipping Points in Global Environmental Policy," World Resources Institute, James A. Harmon Conference Center, 10 G Street NE, Suite 800

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/05/methane-cras-fate-remains-unclear-as-time-runs-down-022622>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

FERC's LaFleur presses New England states on market options [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 05/01/2017 06:15 PM EDT

Acting FERC Chairman Cheryl LaFleur Monday questioned whether the New England grid members could overcome their state policy differences and cut a deal with FERC to adapt the wholesale markets to their individual power generation goals.

Some of the ISO New England states have required their utilities to purchase renewable energy from wind farms or hydroelectric plants, and Connecticut is considering mandates to support its nuclear power plants. Those requirements have jolted the wholesale power markets — potentially forcing FERC to step in with new market rules to mitigate the price impacts, or back down and allow the state subsidies that could push some fossil fuel plants into retirement.

LaFleur noted that the state officials who were participating in Monday's discussions or sent in comments had expressed a "lack of trust in FERC solutions." While the states want the wholesale market to help keep power plants online and offer incentives for new plants to ensure grid reliability, they don't want the market to interfere with their policy goals.

"Do you think there's a way to define what the states want and price it, or do the states want by definition the ability to chose?" LaFleur said.

"There's a lot of value in having ISO run markets," said Jeffrey Bentz, director of analysis for the New England States Committee on Electricity, a group that represents the governor of the six New England states. But states are still undecided on what they want more broadly, he said. "We get that question, we have to answer it. The ball's in our court," he said.

Bentz and officials from New Hampshire and Connecticut said in addition to their wariness over FERC rule changes, cost is an issue, since they did not want their consumers to be subsidizing policy goals in other states.

"What I want is not to pay for Massachusetts' and Connecticut's policies, bluntly, so that shows you the dynamic there," said Robert Scott, a commissioner on the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission.

"I'll agree with you there actually," said Rob Klee, a commissioner of Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

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Assembly Democrats not satisfied with administration's answers on nuclear subsidy [Back](#)

By Marie J. French | 05/01/2017 05:27 PM EDT

ALBANY — Assembly Democrats hammered Gov. Andrew Cuomo's top energy officials during a hearing on Monday about a subsidy for upstate nuclear plants that took effect a month ago.

The lawmakers questioned whether the cost — about \$1 billion in the first two years — is necessary, what alternatives were considered and why downstate ratepayers are footing the bill.

Not all of those questions were satisfactorily answered, said Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, who chairs the Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee. Dinowitz has raised concerns about Exelon, which operates the plants, making a profit from the subsidy, as opposed to the funds being used for operational costs to keep the plants open.

He said his questions about that possibility were not answered by interim Public Service Commission chair Gregg Sayre.

"He didn't have a number," Dinowitz said. "It's a bailout. There's no debate about that, the question is how big the bailout is and we don't have the answer on that. That's what I wanted to know ... How much is going directly into the pockets of the company?"

Sayre pointed to Exelon's contention that it needed \$50 per megawatt hour to make operating the plants viable. The combined price of the zero emissions credits and expected revenues for the first two years of the subsidy is slightly lower than that — about \$48 per megawatt hour.

Dinowitz pressed the point with Sayre, asking how much would be profit.

"We don't know exactly how much is profit," Sayre said, adding as Dinowitz continued his questioning, "We don't have a dollar amount."

The subsidy helps keep open four upstate nuclear reactors, three of which were in danger of closing. It was approved in August as part of the state's Clean Energy Standard, which mandates that the state get to 50 percent renewable electricity by 2030. Ratepayers around the state began paying for the zero emissions credits, or ZECs, in April.

The subsidy has been challenged in court by competing generators and an environmental group.

As lawmakers pushed for answers Monday, Cuomo officials acknowledged the difficulty of estimating the subsidy's final price. They also said siting and cost would make replacing the nuclear plants with renewables impossible in the near-term.

Opponents of the nuclear subsidy, including a coalition of environmental and good government groups behind the "Stop the Cuomo Tax" campaign, have argued that the nuclear plants can be replaced by renewable energy in a measured way. Assembly Democrats asked whether such an alternative had been considered.

Sayre said replacing all of the upstate nuclear plants — which supply about 3,200 megawatts of

electricity — with renewables would cost \$100 million more annually than the subsidy. He based that figure on a very rough estimate comparing the cost of zero emissions credits for nuclear versus renewable energy credits, or RECs. He said the cost would be even greater in the future as renewable energy credits are expected get more expensive as easier-to-site projects are completed and they get pricier.

Sayre and NYSERDA president and CEO John Rhodes said it would be nearly impossible to site that much renewable capacity in a short period.

"It would've been that much more and it would've gotten worse — had we been able to site them, which of course we couldn't have done in a few months," Sayre said.

Subsidy opponents have emphasized the \$7.6 billion cost over 12 years of the plan. The subsidy will cost \$483 million annually in the first two years and is recalculated every two years. The administration offered its own estimate of \$2.8 billion, based on forecasted increases in energy prices, in late March.

Questioned by lawmakers about the certainty of such forecasts, Sayre said it was "crazy" to try to estimate energy prices 12 years in the future.

"We don't know what it's going to cost. Nobody does," Paul Agresta, the PSC's general counsel, later said.

Lawmakers also raised concerns about whether the administration has made plans for the eventual closure of the plants after the 12-year subsidy ends and the plants come up for their license renewals.

"What is the plan?" asked Assemblywoman Pamela Hunter, a Democrat from Syracuse. "I'm talking about particulars, about decimating an actual community... what is the plan for closure so communities aren't crushed?"

Sayre said there's 12 years to plan for that transition rather than a few months as the alternative.

"Your planning contingencies should have anticipated this by many years, instead of coming up on it like a bug on the windshield," said Assemblyman Steve Englebright, who chairs the Environmental Conservation Committee.

The Assembly Democrats who called the hearing, most of them from downstate, also focused on the cost of the subsidy for ratepayers in their communities when the economic benefits of the jobs saved are all upstate. The ZECs are charged on the basis of how much each energy a ratepayer uses. Since downstate consumes more of the electricity in the state, much of the subsidy comes from downstate ratepayers.

"If we use the social cost of carbon ... but we don't factor in economic development, jobs, then the cost is going to be on downstate ratepayers," said Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, who chairs the Energy Committee.

The Cuomo administration has argued that everyone in the state benefits from the avoided carbon emissions because of the subsidy, making it fair to distribute the costs equally.

It's not clear what, if any, action the Assembly Democrats will take on the nuclear subsidy. Senate Republicans have shown no interest in thwarting the subsidies, as their members represent communities near the plants.

Assemblyman Brian Kavanagh, chair of the Consumer Affairs and Protection Committee, said the lawmakers would review information provided just minutes before the hearing and then decide.

"It's still an open question how this program goes forward," he said at the end of the hearing.

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Trump orders Interior to launch national monument reviews [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 04/26/2017 11:48 AM EDT

President Donald Trump today ordered his administration to consider whether to shrink or eliminate national monuments that have placed millions of acres of federal land off limits to development.

Trump signed an executive order directing Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to review two dozen monuments that were created since the Clinton administration. The president also asked Zinke to come up with possible legislative fixes to the 1906 Antiquities Act, which gives presidents wide latitude to establish national monuments on federal lands.

At the signing at the Interior Department, Trump said former President Barack Obama had abused the Act to implement a land grab that placed 265 million acres under the control of the federal government.

"Today we are putting the states back in charge," Trump said

Conservation groups [worry](#) Trump and Zinke could weaken the underlying law that has been a conservation tool for 16 past presidents and potentially open up sensitive areas to fossil fuel development. Legal experts say it is unclear whether Trump could fully revoke previous monument designations, but he may be able to shrink the size of protected areas. Congress would have to implement any changes to the Antiquities Act itself.

Ahead of the signing, Zinke said "somewhere along the way, the Act became the tool of political advocacy rather than public interest, and it is easy to see why some designations are viewed negatively by those most impacted."

WHAT'S NEXT: Zinke is directed to come back with an interim report within 45 days and a

final report in 120 days, and any actions Trump takes as a result are likely to face legal challenges, especially if he tries to revoke previous designations.

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Zinke starts offshore leasing program review [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 05/01/2017 03:52 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed a secretarial order today directing BOEM to start a review of the agency's five-year plan for offering oil and gas leases in federally controlled waters.

The move follows President Donald Trump's Friday [executive order](#) directing the agency to launch the review of the leasing plan set in place by the Obama administration.

"We're going to look at everything," Zinke said before signing the order at a Consumer Energy Alliance event in Houston, which was streamed on Facebook.

WHAT'S NEXT: Zinke told reporters last week the review of the offshore plan could take two years to complete.

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Zinke taps political ally to coordinate Interior energy work [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 05/01/2017 04:49 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke today named the treasurer of his former congressional leadership PAC to a newly created position coordinating the agency's energy policies across its nine bureaus.

Vincent DeVito, a Boston-based energy lawyer, will be counselor to the secretary for energy policy, where he will be responsible for ensuring all the agencies are on the same page, Zinke said at a Consumer Energy Alliance event in Houston, which was streamed on Facebook.

Between the Fish and Wildlife Service, BOEM, BSEE, BLM "and all the different departments I have, it's confusing for me," Zinke said.

"So I just need a single point of contact. ... We have to look at ourselves through to make sure we're streamlined and our regulations aren't arbitrary," he said.

When Zinke was a member of the House, DeVito, a partner at Bowditch & Dewey, was listed as treasurer for Zinke's leadership PAC, the Supporting Electing American Leaders or SEAL PAC.

DeVito has worked on a number of energy issues, including on [pipelines](#). He represented conservation land trusts in opposing Northeast Energy Direct — a project Kinder Morgan

withdrew its federal application in May 2016.

DeVito also worked in the George W. Bush administration as Department of Energy's general counsel's office and as DOE's U.S. Assistant Secretary of Energy for Policy and International Affairs.

WHAT'S NEXT: DeVito does not require Senate confirmation for his newly created position, and Zinke did not provide any indication of when President Donald Trump would nominate more senior leaders at Interior.

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DOE beachhead member lands senior EERE post [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 05/01/2017 05:30 PM EDT

The Institute for Energy Research's Daniel Simmons will take up a leading post at the Department of Energy as the acting assistant secretary for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, the agency said in an email to staff today.

DOE said Simmons, a former vice president for policy at the libertarian-leaning IER, would take the role of principal deputy assistant secretary for the office effective today. However, without an EERE assistant secretary who has been nominated and confirmed by the Senate, Simmons can only hold the position on a temporary basis.

DOE confirmed Simmons' appointment.

Simmons was a member of President Donald Trump's transition and beachhead teams at DOE. Before joining IER, he directed the Natural Resources Task Force at the American Legislative Exchange Council.

Steven Chalk, who had served in the position for the past few months, will now return to his role as the deputy assistant secretary for operations, according to the email.

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Pruitt won't attend Oklahoma GOP fundraiser [Back](#)

By Annie Snider | 04/27/2017 09:59 AM EDT

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt will not attend a May 5 Oklahoma GOP fundraiser because of a flier touting his appearance, he said this morning.

"We're not going to be able to attend because of the invitation that was sent out," Pruitt told Fox News Radio host Brian Kilmeade.

Pruitt noted that his attendance had been approved in advance by EPA's ethics office, but it was the flier, which used his title and promoted remarks he would make about his EPA job, that "prevented my attendance."

Sen. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) (D-R.I.) this week alleged that Pruitt's appearance would violate the Hatch Act, the law limiting political activities by presidential appointees and other government officials, and asked the U.S. Office of Special Counsel to investigate.

In the radio interview, Pruitt was asked whether he will urge Trump to exit the Paris climate change agreement. "Without a doubt, yes," he responded.

"It's just a bad business deal, it's something we need to exit. We need to stay at the table, we need to show the leadership to the rest of the world as we already are, but Paris is ... an America last strategy as opposed to an America first strategy," he said.

After an uproar over previous comments about the role carbon emissions play in climate change, Pruitt today acknowledged that "climate change is occurring and human activity contributes to that, carbon contributes to that." But, he said, "we can't measure with precision the amount of human activity, what it contributes to that climate change."

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Let kids' climate suit go to trial, judge recommends [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 05/01/2017 04:21 PM EDT

A federal magistrate judge today said that a group of children seeking to force the federal government to take drastic action on climate change should be allowed to make their case in court.

The Trump administration, backed up by the oil and manufacturing industries, in March asked a judge in the U.S. District Court in Oregon to let them leapfrog her and ask the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals to toss out the case before it goes to trial.

In a 16-page [recommendation](#) today, Thomas Coffin, a magistrate judge assisting with the case, recommended that District Court Judge Ann Aiken reject the administration's request. Aiken [concluded](#) last year that there were enough questions to merit a trial.

Many of the legal questions are inextricably tied to scientific questions about climate change's causes and risks, as well as the government's past and current efforts to curb greenhouse gases or encourage fossil fuel development, Coffin wrote. A trial would allow the Trump administration and industry groups to present any evidence against climate change and its risks in a public forum, he added.

The children behind the lawsuit argue that the government has violated a public trust doctrine by knowing of climate change for decades but not doing enough to combat the threat. The Obama

and Trump administrations have rejected that argument.

The Trump administration could still ask the 9th Circuit to get involved, but officials would have a much harder time if Aiken agrees with Coffin.

WHAT'S NEXT: Judge Aiken must decide whether to agree with Coffin's assessment or give her blessing to the Trump administration's early appeal effort.

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Pruitt says EPA working on plans to approve states' coal ash programs [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 05/01/2017 05:17 PM EDT

EPA is working on its procedures for reviewing and approving states' coal ash permitting programs, Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a Friday [letter](#).

A water infrastructure package that was signed into law in December included a bipartisan compromise on coal ash regulation that came in response to EPA's 2014 regulation on coal ash, a toxic byproduct of burning coal for electricity. The [compromise](#) shifted permitting responsibilities to the states, which must first get EPA approval of their programs' broad contours, while EPA gained more enforcement powers and other concessions.

EPA is currently working on the needed guidance for states to seek such approval, Pruitt wrote in a letter to Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval.

"EPA has started developing guidance for states about how EPA expects to review and approve state applications to operate permit programs and allow flexibility in individual permits in lieu of the national standards," Pruitt wrote.

The topic was discussed at a recent gathering of state environmental officials, and the agency plans to go into technical detail with the Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials, Pruitt added.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA will develop draft guidance and may seek public input before issuing final guidance on how it will review state submissions.

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Bipartisan coal ash provision included in final WRDA [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 12/05/2016 04:28 PM EDT

The final version of the [Water Resources Development Act](#) released today by House and Senate negotiators includes a tweaked version of language passed earlier this year by the Senate that would change the permitting and enforcement regime for EPA's coal ash rule.

The language will require states to get EPA approval for their coal ash disposal permitting plans, and the agency will also gain more enforcement powers, on top of potential citizen lawsuits.

"This new permitting authority fixes the main problems with the recent coal ash regulation issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, by removing citizen suits as the sole means of enforcement and allowing states to tailor permit requirements on a case-by-case basis," Sens. [Jim Inhofe](#), [Joe Manchin](#), [Shelley Moore Capito](#) and [John Hoeven](#) said in a joint statement.

The provision won bipartisan backing, although various environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, Environmental Integrity Project and the Waterkeeper Alliance, raised issues with the language.

The new language would also extend EPA's timeline to review authorized state programs from every five years to every 12 years. And it gives EPA more time to review state programs, includes language allowing states to ask EPA to review a neighboring state's program, and requires EPA to operate a backstop permit program for states without authorized programs.

The bill is expected to hit the House floor this week.

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Conservatives demanding details on federal workers' encryption use [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 02/14/2017 03:00 PM EDT

Republicans in Congress and their conservative allies are demanding details about federal workers' use of encrypted messaging apps, part of a broader counterattack on employees suspected of opposing President Donald Trump's agenda.

Congressional Republicans are also pondering changes to longstanding laws that protect government workers, further stoking fears among some federal employees that the new administration's supporters are out to squash dissent.

Republicans on the House Science Committee took up the cause on Tuesday by [asking](#) EPA's inspector general to review reports that agency employees are using an app called Signal, which allows people to exchange encrypted text messages and phone calls. POLITICO [reported](#) this month that a group of fewer than a dozen EPA employees were using the app to discuss what they would do if Trump's political appointees flout the law or delete valuable scientific data.

The anti-Trump resistance has infuriated Republicans, who fear that dissenters in the government could undercut the president's policy proposals by unleashing even more embarrassing leaks. They also contend that the use of encrypted messaging circumvents federal record-keeping laws — an argument Science Chairman [Lamar Smith](#) (R-Texas) echoed in Tuesday's letter.

"[T]he Committee is concerned that these encrypted and off-the-record communication practices,

if true, run afoul of federal record-keeping requirements, leaving information that could be responsive to future Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and congressional requests unattainable," wrote Smith, who organized the letter to the IG. The panel has jurisdiction over many cybersecurity issues.

Outside conservative groups have launched similar efforts.

Citing POLITICO's story, the Cause of Action Institute, a right-leaning watchdog group, filed a request under the Freedom of Information Act this month seeking EPA employees' communications using Signal. "The bottom line is: An encrypted app is basically a way to avoid transparency," Institute Assistant Vice President Henry Kerner said in an interview.

It's not just encryption that is raising eyebrows. Republican research firm America Rising filed a FOIA request this month seeking all emails sent by John O'Grady, a top union official at the EPA, that "mentions or refers to President Trump."

The FOIA request came in response to O'Grady's comments to The Washington Post that Trump's decision to firing then-acting Attorney General Sally Yates "sends kind of a chilling effect" through agencies. O'Grady did not respond to a request for comment.

"The public is entitled to know whether career federal government employees are engaged in partisan politics on the taxpayers' dime," said Allan Blutstein, vice president of FOIA operations at America Rising.

EPA employees said they are not using Signal for official government business, and they raised concerns that they're being targeted because they are critical of Trump.

"I don't think anybody can dictate which apps we use on our personal time, for personal conversations," one EPA employee told POLITICO.

The debate comes as employees across the government — political appointees and career officials alike — are increasingly relying on encrypted messaging apps, fearing repercussions if their private conversations are made public.

National security officials have long used encrypted mobile phone software like Signal and WhatsApp to communicate with reporters and other staffers. Signal frequently comes up in articles advising people how they can communicate free of snooping from government officials or hackers, especially following the massive leaks of stolen Democratic Party emails that roiled last year's presidential election.

Trump's appointees have gotten into the act, too: The Washington Post reported this week that administration staff members are using an app called Confide, which deletes messages once they are read, because they're afraid of being accused of leaking to the press. That's also a threat to transparency and accountability, argued Tom Fitton, president of the conservative activist group Judicial Watch, in an interview with POLITICO on Tuesday.

"If they're conducting government business via an application that destroys records, that's a problem that needs to stop," said Fitton, adding that the administration needs to either train its staff on the issue or send them a reminder. He added that the Trump administration is "asking for a lawsuit from either Judicial Watch or someone else if they don't get their act together on these records policies."

Asked if the House Science Committee will pursue a similar probe of White House staffers' use of encrypted messaging apps, spokeswoman Kristina Baum declined to make any commitments. But she said the panel "intends to continue to monitor" cyber issues.

The growing tension across the government has some career employees worried that Republicans will try to make radical changes to laws protecting federal workers — a move that could make people more fearful to speak out against Trump. Trump has already imposed a freeze on most federal hires and has promised to reduce the size of the workforce.

"Frankly, the climate has shifted rather dramatically and we've gone from a chief executive who respects civil servants to a rather bombastic, disdainful chief executive who unfortunately empowers their disparagement," Rep. [Gerry Connolly](#) (D-Va.) said in an interview.

Rep. [Jason Chaffetz](#) (R-Utah), chairman of the House Oversight Committee, is eyeing a major overhaul of the civil service system. He has discussed phasing out pensions for new government employees, instead relying on a defined-contribution plan like a 401(k), and has advocated making it easier to fire problem workers. Chaffetz reportedly talked about some of these issues during a recent meeting with Trump.

Connolly said he's concerned that the Republican Congress could win enough support to move a bill gutting civil service protections. "It is very alarming and I think frankly very destructive in terms of the fabric of a free government and a free society," he said.

In the Senate, lawmakers are also considering changes to civil service laws, but Sen. [James Lankford](#) (R-Okla.) said he is eyeing targeted tweaks that can win bipartisan support, such as efforts to improve the hiring process.

"If we can keep it small and we can keep it targeted, I think we can move it through unanimous consent," said Lankford, who chairs the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee's panel on regulatory affairs and federal management. "We need to be better at hiring. If we're better at hiring we don't have to worry about firing."

Alex Guillén and Eric Geller contributed to this story.

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What you need to know to start your day.

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Climate Office Shifts Focus • Protecting Latin America's Water • Getting 'Inside the Fence'

By [Chuck McCutcheon](#)

The Energy Department has an Office of International Climate and Technology—but unlike under President Obama, the office doesn't see climate as part of its job.

Instead, the six-person office—which the Obama administration created in 2010—is shifting to priorities that are in line with President Trump's: promoting carbon capture for coal and nuclear energy technologies, [Rebecca Kern](#) reports in a story being published today.

The climate and technology office is within the department's Office of International Affairs.

"A lot of the focus [during the Obama administration] was travel to promote climate change, but that's not really the role of this office," says Wells Griffith, a former Trump campaign staffer and Republican National Committee employee who has led the international affairs office since August.

Protecting Latin America's water resources from a variety of threats—including climate change and aging infrastructure—is on next year's priority list for many nations in the region.

Half of Central America's potable water is lost because of old and overused water systems in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama, officials told Bloomberg Environment as part of our ongoing series of issues to watch in 2018.

"We need to begin working on intraregional policies that safeguard watersheds from

overuse and contamination,” says Salvador Nieto, executive secretary of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development.

Other Stories We’re Covering

- South Korea’s 2018 energy agenda will be dominated by the Moon Jae-in administration’s pledge to phase out nuclear and coal plants and increase renewable power, [Elaine Ramirez](#) reports in another issues-to-watch story being published today.
- Arkansas agricultural officials next week [will reconsider](#) regulations on dicamba, a herbicide linked to almost 1,000 complaints of crop damage in the state, [Tiffany Stecker](#) reports.
- A federal appeals court [is ordering](#) the EPA to revise its standards for lead paint—known to cause damage to developing brains and nervous systems—within 15 months.

Quote of the Day

“This is not an administration that is trying to hide the ball on what it’s hoping to accomplish.”

— Megan Berge, an attorney with Baker Botts LLP in Washington who represents several utility industry clients, [describing](#) the EPA’s ongoing attempts to roll back regulations on multiple fronts.

All About: ‘Inside the Fence’

The debate over any replacement of the Clean Power Plan is beginning to unfold—and at its center lies an approach called “inside the fence.”

Inside the fence refers to what’s possible within the confines of individual power plants—basically, how the EPA demands that companies improve their own processes and efficiency to emit less greenhouse gases.

A plume of exhaust extends from the Mitchell Power Station, a coal-fired power plant 20 miles southwest of Pittsburgh, in September 2013.
Photographer: Jeff Swensen/Getty Images

That differs from the broader stance taken by President Obama’s EPA, which included approaches that encompassed the entire electricity grid—such as encouraging shifting generation from coal to natural gas and renewable energy—for its signature greenhouse gas emissions-reductions program. But President Trump’s administration, and many industry groups, argue that an inside-the-fence approach is all that the Clean Air Act allows the EPA to do.

As a result, utility, manufacturing, and other industry groups want the EPA to move forward with a narrow Clean Power Plan replacement rule. But numerous inside-the-fence conflicts are still ahead.

Environmentalists say the Clean Power Plan got it right. They warn that an industry-envisioned inside-the-fence rule wouldn't satisfy the EPA's duty under the Clean Air Act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

But the inside-the-fence approach could spark conflicts within industry factions, too. Those factions are likely to squabble about just *how* narrow to make the EPA's replacement rule, at what level to require plants' efficiency improvements, and how many subcategories should be available for different types of plants. — *Abby Smith*

Around the Web

- Day-to-day air pollution increases contribute to an extra 20,000 deaths a year, a new medical study finds.
- Indigenous people living on Amazon river basins have occupied oil platforms as part of repeated protests against oil companies about river contamination.
- EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's detractors and backers debate his definition of environmental protection.
- A small island off Puerto Rico's coast saw a disruption in its dinoflagellates—sea life that lights up when disturbed—after Hurricane Maria, but its bay is starting to glow again as it recovers.

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EPA Morning News Highlights 9.7.17

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The Washington Free Beacon: EPA Workforce Approaching Lowest Levels Since Reagan

The Environmental Protection Agency will soon employ the lowest number of workers since the Ronald Reagan administration. Hundreds of employees have accepted buyouts and taken early retirement since President Donald Trump's inauguration, according to an EPA official. Congress put a cap on the number of people the EPA can employ at 15,000 in the 2017 omnibus bill. By the end of September, the EPA will employ 14,459 people, with dozens still considering buyout offers.

The Daily Caller: Nearly 50 Percent Of The EPA's Entire Workforce Are Eligible To Retire Within Next Five Years

Half of the Environmental Protection Agency's entire workforce can retire with full benefits within the next five years, according to a review of documents The Daily Caller News Foundation obtained Wednesday. Nearly 25 percent of the agency's current workforce can retire today with full benefits, while another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the documents, which were part of a wider trove of material released to Reuters and TheDCNF.

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Red State: EPA Reaches Staffing Levels Not Seen Since The Reagan Administration

What is going on at the EPA is nothing short of amazing. The workforce at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is on course to fall to its lowest level since Ronald Reagan was president, an agency official said on Tuesday. After buyouts and retirements, that number could drop to 14,428 by October, the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said in an email. That would be below the fiscal 1988 level, when EPA staffing was 14,440, the official noted. A further 2,998 employees, or just over 20 percent of the total, are eligible to retire now, the official said.

The Washington Examiner: EPA staff levels to hit 30-year low this month

The Environmental Protection Agency's workforce numbers are expected to drop to levels unseen since President Ronald Reagan was in office through an employee buyout program that kicks in this month, according to an agency official. unveiled its program to begin buying out employees in June to meet President Trump's goal of reining in the agency's budget. With combined buyouts and retirements, the EPA will go from an employee ceiling of 15,000 employees to 14,428. That is below the 14,440 employees at the agency seen in fiscal year 1988 when President Reagan was still in office, the official noted.

The South Bend Tribune: EPA to test homes' soil near LaSalle Park Superfund site in South Bend

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sent nine staffers here Wednesday to deliver two messages at a public meeting about a former hazardous waste dump, but several residents who attended had a message of their own. The EPA wanted to first tell the public that soil samples taken last summer from LaSalle Park, a federal Superfund site since 2013, indicated the park is safe for recreational use, such as playing soccer, baseball, basketball, picnicking, sledding, walking and jogging. State and federal officials have known since 1984 that several industrial companies, including Bendix Corp., had dumped hazardous wastes at the site from the 1930s to the mid-1950s, before it became a park.

The Associated Press: EPA: Oklahoma Oil Company's Houston Spill Cleaned Up

A spokeswoman for the Environmental Protection Agency says a 2,500-gallon oil spill at an Oklahoma company's Houston-area facility has been cleaned up. EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said the agency had closely coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard, which reported the cleanup was completed Tuesday. An EPA news release sent Wednesday night did not include details about the spill, including whether it endangered drinking water or forced evacuations.

National Morning News Highlights 9.7.17

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The Associated Press: Hurricane Irma toll hits 10, increasing threat for Florida

Fearsome Hurricane Irma cut a path of devastation across the northern Caribbean, leaving at least 10 dead and thousands homeless after destroying buildings and uprooting trees on a track Thursday that could lead to a catastrophic strike on Florida. The most potent Atlantic Ocean hurricane ever, Irma weakened only slightly Thursday morning and remained a powerful

Category 5 storm with winds of 180 mph (285 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center. The storm was increasingly likely to rip into heavily populated South Florida early Sunday, prompting the governor to declare an emergency and officials to impose mandatory evacuation orders for parts of the Miami metro area and the Florida Keys. Forecasters said it could punish the entire Atlantic coast of Florida and rage on into Georgia and South Carolina.

Bloomberg: Trump's Surprise Deal With Democrats Sets Up Christmas Showdown

President Donald Trump's unexpected decision to spurn his Republican allies in Congress by striking a short-term debt-limit deal with Democrats leaves the GOP reeling and lawmakers bracing for a bruising battle in December. Trump's move undercut GOP leaders in the House and Senate, as well as his own Treasury secretary, who had been arguing for a longer-term extension. It also left Republicans, who were blindsided by the deal, angry and disappointed with their own leaders and, to a lesser degree, Trump. "Democrats got exactly what they wanted," House Freedom Caucus head Mark Meadows said, adding that the deal "gives them the greatest leverage in the world to get exactly what they want later."

The Wall Street Journal: President Trump Unlikely to Nominate Gary Cohn to Become Fed Chairman

President Donald Trump is unlikely to nominate Gary Cohn, his top economic adviser, as the next Federal Reserve chairman, according to people familiar with the president's thinking, adding to the uncertainty over the U.S. central bank's leadership and policies next year. Mr. Trump told The Wall Street Journal in July that he was considering Mr. Cohn as a potential successor to Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen, whose term as central bank chief expires in early February. The change in thinking comes at a time of great uncertainty over the top ranks of the world's most important central bank.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/epa-workforce-approaching-lowest-levels-since-reagan/>

EPA Workforce Approaching Lowest Levels Since Reagan

By Elizabeth Harrington, 9/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency will soon employ the lowest number of workers since the Ronald Reagan administration.

Hundreds of employees have accepted buyouts and taken early retirement since President Donald Trump's inauguration, according to an EPA official.

Congress put a cap on the number of people the EPA can employ at 15,000 in the 2017 omnibus bill. By the end of September, the EPA will employ 14,459 people, with dozens still considering buyout offers.

Last month, 374 employees took buyouts. An additional 33 employees are retiring at the end of September, and 45 others are considering early retirement offers.

If half of those individuals also choose to leave the agency, EPA employment levels would fall below 14,440. The last time EPA was at an actual employment level of 14,440 was in 1988, when Ronald Reagan was president. The number of employees at EPA fell even lower in 1989, before peaking at 18,110 in 1999.

Scott Pruitt, the EPA administrator, said the agency is dedicated to shrinking the size of government. The Trump administration's goal is to cut the EPA workforce by 25 percent.

"We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," Pruitt said. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars, and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs."

The agency could shrink even more, as 20.17 percent of the EPA's employees are eligible to retire right now, according to the EPA's Resources Management Office.

Another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the EPA official.

The EPA has two buyout programs, VSIP and VERA, which give employees cash payments to incentivize early retirement. Maximum payments are typically \$25,000 for employees who are over 50 and have worked at the agency for at least 20 years. The average EPA employee makes \$113,820.

Several employees who have claimed they are retiring in protest of the new Republican administration, have been eligible for early retirement.

In one case, Elizabeth Southerland, the former director of the Office of Science and Technology in EPA's Office of Water, said she was quitting on principle over President Trump's budget request to reduce the agency's spending to \$5.7 billion.

Southerland, who earned a \$250,000 salary with a \$64,000 bonus, was eligible for early retirement, and made her protest two months after the budget was released.

The NTK Network obtained an email from Southerland where she said she was retiring because of family issues, not because of Trump, Pruitt, or the budget proposal.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/09/06/nearly-50-percent-of-the-epas-entire-workforce-are-eligible-to-retire-within-next-five-years/>

Nearly 50 Percent Of The EPA's Entire Workforce Are Eligible To Retire Within Next Five Years

By Chris White, 9/6/17

Half of the Environmental Protection Agency's entire workforce can retire with full benefits

within the next five years, according to a review of documents The Daily Caller News Foundation obtained Wednesday.

Nearly 25 percent of the agency's current workforce can retire today with full benefits, while another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the documents, which were part of a wider trove of material released to Reuters and TheDCNF.

The revelation comes as the EPA continues offering buyout packages to employees.

Nearly 362 EPA employees accepted a voluntary buyout, or a VERA, earlier this month, while another 12 employees retired in August, the documents show. Another 33 employees are expected to retire at the end of September, and an additional 45 employees are considering buyout offers.

EPA employment levels could tumble to 14,428, which would be lower than the 14,440-level found during the latter half of the Ronald Reagan presidency. The agency had 15,561 employees during former President Barack Obama's final term in office, all of whom earned an average salary of \$113,820. The average American income is about \$50,000.

The buyouts are helping the Trump administration reduce the size of government, EPA chief Scott Pruitt said in a statement Wednesday.

"We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," said Pruitt, who sued the agency nearly a dozen times during his time as Oklahoma's attorney general. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government ... staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs."

Pruitt is responsible for carrying out President Donald Trump's mission of rolling back significant portions of his Democratic predecessor's climate agenda. He was also one of the officials who helped convince the president to leave the Paris climate agreement, which obligated the U.S. cut greenhouse gas emissions 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.

The document comes shortly after reports from July showed the EPA planned to buy out 1,227 positions, 655 of which will be from agency headquarters in Washington, D.C. EPA indicated a willingness to offer employees up to \$25,000 in cash in exchange for them leaving, which is standard practice for federal employees hoping to retire early.

The largest number of buyouts, 183, will come from the Office of Research and Development. EPA will also offer buyouts to 98 employees at the Office of Administration and Resource Management, and make the same offer to 94 workers at the Office of Land and Emergency Management.

Red State

<https://www.redstate.com/streiff/2017/09/06/epa-reaches-staffing-levels-not-seen-since-reagan-administration/>

EPA Reaches Staffing Levels Not Seen Since The Reagan Administration

By Streiff, 9/6/17

What is going on at the EPA is nothing short of amazing.

The workforce at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is on course to fall to its lowest level since Ronald Reagan was president, an agency official said on Tuesday.

After buyouts and retirements, that number could drop to 14,428 by October, the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said in an email.

That would be below the fiscal 1988 level, when EPA staffing was 14,440, the official noted. A further 2,998 employees, or just over 20 percent of the total, are eligible to retire now, the official said.

C. Northcote Parkinson, British economist and writer of age-of-sail fiction, once wrote about The Law of Multiplication of Subordinates in his essay called Parkinson's Law. The EPA has epitomized this phenomenon. What makes it worse is that the EPA hires smart, energetic, myopic, true-believer, enviro-nazis who are not content with an "eight-and-the-gate" mentality but willingly put in extra hours to make sure you feel the hand of the Environmental Deity... and law enforcement, if need be.

Over time, the EPA has ventured out from its core functions to worrying about livestock flatulence as a cause of global warming and rating appliances on energy efficiency...when it is not causing massive toxic waste spills and running from responsibility.

Though I fully realize that this is merely another futile gesture by the Trump administration and doesn't really count as an accomplishment because it is an act that can be changed by any future president, I do have to say the strategy of forcing the EPA to restrict its activities, despite its penchant for do-gooder nannyism and outright legal thuggery, to core functions by starving it of personnel is welcome.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-staff-levels-to-hit-30-year-low-this-month/article/2633530>

EPA staff levels to hit 30-year low this month

By John Siciliano, 9/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency's workforce numbers are expected to drop to levels unseen since President Ronald Reagan was in office through an employee buyout program that kicks in this month, according to an agency official.

EPA unveiled its program to begin buying out employees in June to meet President Trump's goal of reining in the agency's budget. With combined buyouts and retirements, the EPA will go from an employee ceiling of 15,000 employees to 14,428. That is below the 14,440 employees at the agency seen in fiscal year 1988 when President Reagan was still in office, the official noted.

Last week, 362 employees accepted voluntary buyouts and another 12 employees retired, the official said. On top of that, another 33 employees are set to retire at the end of September and 45 other employees are considering buyout offers, the officials said.

The official explained that the agency is "incredibly top-heavy" and that 25 percent of current employees are eligible to retire with full benefits today. These employees are being encouraged to retire along with another 25 percent that can retire in the next five years, the official explained.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement that he is encouraging employees to retire early. "We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," he said. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs."

With early retirements, the total number of employees let go could rise to around 3,000, which fits with Trump's budget blueprint.

Meanwhile, senior House Republicans are asking Pruitt if the buyouts are going through the necessary oversight that the Obama administration had avoided when it bought out some employees three years ago.

House Energy and Commerce Committee leaders want to be briefed on the EPA buyout plan, according to a letter to Pruitt sent Tuesday evening. Reps. Greg Walden, R-OR, chairman of the energy committee, and Tim Murphy, R-PA, chairman of committee's oversight panel, said they want to ensure that EPA's goal of finalizing these buyouts this month acts in the best interest of the taxpayer, and are worried Trump might be using the same flawed process that Obama used.

The last round of buyouts made in 2014 did not go through proper channels for approval. The EPA Office of the Inspector General said that many of the positions the previous administration provided buyouts for were not eliminated, according to the letter.

"While EPA has made some progress improving the agency's use of buyouts, given the lack of internal controls during the previous administration, the committee wants to ensure that the separation payments becoming effective in September 2017 are an efficient use of taxpayer money and are in compliance with [Office of Personnel Management] requirements," according to the letter.

Walden and Murphy want to be briefed on the buyout process by Sept. 15. "We will respond to Chairman Walden through the proper channel," an agency spokesman said.

The Southbend Tribune

http://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/epa-to-test-homes-soil-near-lasalle-park-superfund-site/article_94dd403d-6a7c-516e-9ac8-a56bab04748a.html

EPA to test homes' soil near LaSalle Park Superfund site in South Bend

By Jeff Parrott, 9/7/17

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sent nine staffers here Wednesday to deliver two messages at a public meeting about a former hazardous waste dump, but several residents who attended had a message of their own.

The EPA wanted to first tell the public that soil samples taken last summer from LaSalle Park, a federal Superfund site since 2013, indicated the park is safe for recreational use, such as playing soccer, baseball, basketball, picnicking, sledding, walking and jogging. State and federal officials have known since 1984 that several industrial companies, including Bendix Corp., had dumped hazardous wastes at the site from the 1930s to the mid-1950s, before it became a park.

The agency, under a mandate from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also announced it soon wants to test soil in yards of homes near the park. Property owners must sign access agreements allowing the testing, which the EPA hopes to start by Oct. 5, issuing a final report by year's end.

The EPA wants to test soil in the yards of homes west of the park to Kenmore Street, east to Kaley Street and south to a line parallel with Newcombe Street.

But in a question-and-answer session following an EPA slideshow presentation, several people in the crowd of about 30 urged the agency to widen its scope. Tom Zmyslo said he worked at Honeywell, corporate successor to Bendix Corp., for more than 30 years, and he recalled an employee meeting in 2001 where workers were shown a map of groundwater contamination all around the plant.

Zmyslo said he is concerned that Honeywell could have contaminated drinking water wells that people still use in the Ardmore area, which is located just west of the city limits. Jenny Davison, EPA's remedial project manager for the LaSalle Park (also called Beck's Lake) site, responded that groundwater hasn't been studied at the LaSalle Park site because people living in the immediate area are served by the city's water system.

Davison said the agency welcomes any information about Honeywell's operations, and after the meeting, officials spoke further with Zmyslo.

Several other audience members said they live in homes just beyond the immediate LaSalle Park area, in some cases a block or two away, from where EPA plans to test residential yard soils, and they want their yards tested too. Davison said the EPA might consider enlarging the testing area if contamination levels are high enough in the first homes' yards.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management in 2009 found elevated levels of arsenic in the yards of nearby homes. Samples from six homes showed arsenic levels that were more than three times what could be expected to occur naturally. That was enough contamination to warrant further, more comprehensive testing, but not enough to require cleanup, said Keith Fusinski, an EPA toxicologist.

Mayor Pete Buttigieg, who in 2013 wrote the EPA a letter asking the agency to engage more with residents about the issue, did not attend the meeting but sent members of his staff.

"The EPA scheduled tonight's meeting without regard for the city's schedule," his spokesman, Mark Bode, said in a written statement. "The city plans to hold a meeting once it has received the results from the EPA and is able to share the plan for moving forward. We anticipate holding the meeting on site, at the Charles Black Recreation Center."

The Associated Press

<http://www.newson6.com/story/36308077/epa-oklahoma-oil-companys-houston-spill-cleaned-up>

EPA: Oklahoma Oil Company's Houston Spill Cleaned Up

By AP 9/7/17

A spokeswoman for the Environmental Protection Agency says a 2,500-gallon oil spill at an Oklahoma company's Houston-area facility has been cleaned up.

EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said the agency had closely coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard, which reported the cleanup was completed Tuesday.

An EPA news release sent Wednesday night did not include details about the spill, including whether it endangered drinking water or forced evacuations.

Magellan Midstream Partners spokesman Bruce Heine says his company reported the spill at its facility in the east Houston suburb of Galena Park on Sunday and has assisted in cleanup.

Heine said the spill resulted from Harvey's strike on Texas.

The Associated Press

<https://apnews.com/77a9a82f58d04bdbb122832b297b199d/Hurricane-Irma-toll-hits-10,-increasing-threat-for-Florida>

Hurricane Irma toll hits 10, increasing threat for Florida

By Danica Coto and Anika Kentish, 9/7/17

Fearsome Hurricane Irma cut a path of devastation across the northern Caribbean, leaving at least 10 dead and thousands homeless after destroying buildings and uprooting trees on a track Thursday that could lead to a catastrophic strike on Florida.

The most potent Atlantic Ocean hurricane ever, Irma weakened only slightly Thursday morning and remained a powerful Category 5 storm with winds of 180 mph (285 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

The storm was increasingly likely to rip into heavily populated South Florida early Sunday, prompting the governor to declare an emergency and officials to impose mandatory evacuation orders for parts of the Miami metro area and the Florida Keys. Forecasters said it could punish the entire Atlantic coast of Florida and rage on into Georgia and South Carolina.

“This could easily be the most costly storm in U.S. history, which is saying a lot considering what just happened two weeks ago,” said Brian McNoldy, a hurricane researcher at the University of Miami, alluding to the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey.

French Interior Minister Gerard Collomb told France Info radio that eight had died and 23 injured in the country’s Caribbean island territories, and he said the toll on Saint-Martin and Saint-Barthelemy could be higher because rescue teams have yet to finish their inspection of the islands.

“The reconnaissance will really start at daybreak,” Collomb said.

At a news conference, Collomb also said 100,000 food rations have been sent to the islands, the equivalent of four days of supplies.

“It’s a tragedy, we’ll need to rebuild both islands,” he said. “Most of the schools have been destroyed.”

French President Emmanuel Macron’s office said he will go to the islands as soon as weather conditions permit.

In the United Kingdom, the government said Irma inflicted “severe and in places critical” damage to the British overseas territory of Anguilla. Foreign Office Minister Alan Duncan said the Caribbean island took the full force of the hurricane. He told lawmakers on Thursday that the British Virgin islands have also suffered “severe damage.”

Irma blacked out much of Puerto Rico, raking the U.S. territory with heavy wind and rain while staying just out to sea, and it headed early Thursday toward the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

To the east, authorities struggled to get aid to small Caribbean islands devastated by the storm’s record 185 mph (298 kph) winds. Communications were difficult with areas hit by Irma, and information on damage trickled out.

Nearly every building on Barbuda was damaged when the hurricane’s core crossed almost directly over the island early Wednesday and about 60 percent of its roughly 1,400 residents were left homeless, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne told The Associated Press.

“It is just really a horrendous situation,” Browne said after returning to Antigua from a plane trip to the neighboring island.

He said roads and telecommunications systems were wrecked and recovery would take months, if not years. A 2-year-old child was killed as a family tried to escape a damaged home during the storm, Browne told the AP.

One death also was reported in the nearby island of Anguilla, where officials reported extensive damage to the airport, hospitals, shelters and school and said 90 percent of roads are impassible, according to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.

The agency also reported “major damage” to houses and commercial buildings in the British Virgin Islands.

On St. Thomas in the nearby U.S. Virgin Islands, Laura Strickling spent 12 hours hunkered down with her husband and 1-year-old daughter in a boarded-up basement apartment with no power as the storm raged outside. They emerged to find the lush island in tatters. Many of their neighbors' homes were damaged and once-dense vegetation was largely gone.

"There are no leaves. It is crazy. One of the things we loved about St. Thomas is that it was so green. And it's gone," Strickling said. "It will take years for this community to get back on its feet."

Significant damage was also reported on St. Martin, an island split between French and Dutch control. Photos and video circulating on social media showed major damage to the airport in Philipsburg and the coastal village of Marigot heavily flooded. France sent emergency food and water there and to the French island of St. Bart's, where Irma ripped off roofs and knocked out electricity.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said Thursday the storm "caused widescale destruction of infrastructure, houses and businesses."

"There is no power, no gasoline, no running water. Houses are under water, cars are floating through the streets, inhabitants are sitting in the dark, in ruined houses and are cut off from the outside world," he said.

By Thursday morning, the center of the storm was about 110 miles (180 kilometers) north of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, and was moving west-northwest near 17 mph (28 kph).

More than half the island of Puerto Rico was without power, leaving 900,000 in the dark and nearly 50,000 without water, the U.S. territory's emergency management agency said in the midst of the storm. Fourteen hospitals were using generators after losing power, and trees and light poles were strewn across roads.

Puerto Rico's public power company warned before the storm hit that some areas could be left without power from four to six months because its staff has been reduced and its infrastructure weakened by the island's decade-long economic slump.

President Donald Trump approved an emergency declaration for the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, allowing the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other agencies to remove debris and give other services that will largely be paid for by the U.S. government.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center predicted Irma would remain at Category 4 or 5 for the next day or two as passes just to the north of the Dominican Republic and Haiti on Thursday, nears the Turks & Caicos and parts of the Bahamas by Thursday night and skirts Cuba on Friday night into Saturday.

It will then likely head north toward Florida, where people were rushing to board up homes, fill cars with gasoline and find a route to safety.

Gov. Rick Scott, who has mobilized parts of the state's National Guard, declared a state of emergency and asked the governors of Alabama and Georgia to waive trucking regulations so gasoline tankers can get fuel into Florida quickly to ease shortages.

An estimated 25,000 people or more left the Florida Keys after all visitors were ordered to clear out, causing bumper-to-bumper traffic on the single highway that links the chain of low-lying islands to the mainland.

Meanwhile, Hurricane Katia hovered in the southern Gulf of Mexico, threatening to hit the vulnerable Mexican coast as a Category 2 or 3 hurricane, possibly late Friday or early Saturday. It had winds of 80 mph (130 kph) and was located about 210 miles (335 kilometers) east of Tampico, Mexico.

And a third hurricane, Jose, was growing far out in the Atlantic. It was no immediate threat to land, though the forecast track showed it could affect the Irma-blasted Leeward Islands over the

weekend. Hurricane Jose had winds of about 90 mph (150 kph). It was centered about 815 miles (1,310 kilometers) east of the Lesser Antilles and moving west-northwest at 18 mph (30 kph).

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-09-07/trump-s-surprise-deal-with-democrats-sets-up-christmas-showdown>

Trump's Surprise Deal With Democrats Sets Up Christmas Showdown

By Laura Litvan, Anna Edgerton, and Erik Wasson, 9/7/17

President Donald Trump's unexpected decision to spurn his Republican allies in Congress by striking a short-term debt-limit deal with Democrats leaves the GOP reeling and lawmakers bracing for a bruising battle in December.

Trump's move undercut GOP leaders in the House and Senate, as well as his own Treasury secretary, who had been arguing for a longer-term extension. It also left Republicans, who were blindsided by the deal, angry and disappointed with their own leaders and, to a lesser degree, Trump.

"Democrats got exactly what they wanted," House Freedom Caucus head Mark Meadows said, adding that the deal "gives them the greatest leverage in the world to get exactly what they want later."

During an Oval Office meeting Wednesday, Trump accepted a proposal by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and his House counterpart, Nancy Pelosi, to tie a three-month suspension of the debt limit to a Hurricane Harvey relief measure -- and throw in a stopgap continuing resolution to fund the government into December.

The episode provided the latest illustration of the bind Republicans find themselves in. Even though they control the White House and both chambers of Congress, they've been unable to set

aside their own differences to get much done. Instead, this latest deal may have simply handed Democrats the upper hand heading into a confrontational end-of-the-year negotiation.

The agreement sets up what could be a major fight in December over government funding that is expected to include Trump's proposed border wall with Mexico and his decision to end a program that lets young undocumented immigrants stay in the U.S., as well as perhaps the debt ceiling.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, who was in the meeting with Trump, didn't see it coming. Hours before Trump's deal, he had told reporters that the Democratic proposal for a short-term debt limit deal would be "unworkable" and "ridiculous."

By late Wednesday, Senate Republicans released a new version of a Harvey aid bill that included the debt ceiling extension and would fund the government through Dec. 8. It also would nearly double the total disaster funding to \$15.25 billion from what the House passed earlier in the day. The additional funding would go toward the Community Development Block Grant program to address housing needs in disaster zones.

Extraordinary Measures

The actual fight over the debt limit could slip into 2018, since the Treasury Department can usually deploy so-called extraordinary measures to extend its ability to operate. The drop-dead date could come as early as February if tax refund outlays are "relatively high," according to Jefferies economists Ward McCarthy and Thomas Simons.

Trump's deal with Democrats did soothe the most immediate concerns in the short-term Treasury market, with rates on Treasury bills maturing around the previous late-September debt-limit deadline plunging. But they surged on securities coming due around mid-December, suggesting Wall Street sees more legislative strife ahead.

"All this really means is that while it's unlikely the U.S. would ever default on Treasury bills, this move today just pushes this risk further out the curve," said Jerome Schneider, head of the

short-term and funding desk at Pacific Investment Management Co., which manages \$1.6 trillion in assets.

The White House tried to sell the deal as a way to “clear the decks” for a tax overhaul, as Trump’s legislative director, Marc Short, put it to reporters.

Longer-term Treasuries also declined, suggesting investors saw better prospects that lawmakers will act on measures to spur economic growth.

“The market is pricing in less gridlock in Washington,” said Alex Li, head of rates strategy at Credit Agricole. “The market seems to be suggesting that the administration and congressional leaders are more open now to get something done in terms of the legislative agenda,” including addressing the nation’s tax system.

But conservatives were fuming over the deal, with one senior Republican aide saying that the deal undercut GOP leaders and bolstered the power of Democrats in Congress.

Asked about the compromise, Freedom Caucus member Ted Yoho of Florida said sarcastically, “It’s great to be in the majority.”

‘Deal is Bad’

"The Pelosi-Schumer-Trump deal is bad," Republican Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska said in a statement.

Trump himself might have agreed, at least back in 2013 when he was still considering a run for the White House. He wrote on Twitter then, "The worst negotiators in history (otherwise known as Republicans) have just offered to suspend debt ceiling for four months. Pathetic!"

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell tried to put the best face on the deal while noting that Trump cut it with Democratic leaders.

“The president can speak for himself,” McConnell told reporters. “But his feeling was that we needed to come together, to not create a picture of divisiveness at a time of genuine national crisis.”

Congress is rushing to pass Hurricane Harvey relief funds by the end of the week because the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s disaster-relief fund is set to run out of money Friday as a more powerful storm, Hurricane Irma, bears down on Florida.

The House voted 419-3 on Wednesday to pass \$7.85 billion to provide relief to tens of thousands of homeowners from flooding caused by Harvey in Texas and other parts of the Gulf Coast. The measure includes \$7.4 billion in FEMA disaster funds and \$450 million for the Small Business Administration. Additional FEMA funding is to be provided later, according to House aides.

Shortly after the vote, Trump and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin met with Republican and Democratic congressional leaders at the White House. McConnell, Ryan and Mnuchin pushed for adding a debt-limit extension of as long as 18 months to the Harvey bill, according to several people with knowledge of the discussion. A three-month debt-limit deal was the last thing Mnuchin wanted, an administration official said.

But Trump said he wanted a deal, and he accepted the Democrats’ offer of a three-month debt-limit measure, one person said. At that point, McConnell stepped in to say a short-term government spending bill should also be added.

Several leaders of conservative groups said they blamed Republican leaders, not Trump, for the deal to add the debt-limit and spending measures to the House bill. They said McConnell and Ryan hadn’t been able to push forward a conservative plan to raise the debt limit in a measure that cut spending.

“This is going to be very bad for our common goal of fundamental tax reform,” Adam Brandon, president of the conservative FreedomWorks group, told reporters in a conference call. “This deal is straight out of the swamp.”

‘Taken Aback’

“I’m a little taken aback by it,” said Representative Mark Walker, the North Carolina Republican who chairs the Republican Study Committee. “Usually you get a heads up” on a major policy decision.

Asked if this deal undercuts Republican leadership’s ability to negotiate with Democrats, Walker replied, “It does.”

Walker said he will present a letter to Ryan on Thursday with a list of policy suggestions that would get more Republicans to support a debt limit deal. It will contain 19 specific suggestions, he said.

Republicans appeared resigned to the notion that the combined measure would likely pass both chambers of Congress, carried by Democratic votes. But a number of Republicans said they would vote against it.

The attempt to tie the Harvey aid passed in the House to the debt limit “is a poison pill & a disservice to those who are suffering,” Representative Richard Hudson of North Carolina tweeted. He said the Senate should pass the House measure without adding more provisions.

FAA and Flood Insurance

The deal still left out a few key priorities that Congress will have to address by the end of the month. Lawmakers still need to pass an authorization for the Federal Aviation Administration so that it can keep operating after Sept. 30. They also have to pass a renewal of the nation’s flood

insurance program, a high priority in the wake of Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma.

Democrats, for their part, luxuriated in the unexpected win.

“Today was a good day in a generally very partisan town,” Schumer told reporters. “And let’s hope we can continue to work together for the good of Americans, for the good of the working families who so much need our help.”

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/president-trump-unlikely-to-nominate-gary-cohn-to-become-fed-chairman-1504731461> **President Trump Unlikely to Nominate Gary Cohn to Become Fed Chairman**

By Michael C. Bender, Harriet Torry, and Nick Timiraos, 9/6/17

President Donald Trump is unlikely to nominate Gary Cohn, his top economic adviser, as the next Federal Reserve chairman, according to people familiar with the president’s thinking, adding to the uncertainty over the U.S. central bank’s leadership and policies next year.

Mr. Trump told The Wall Street Journal in July that he was considering Mr. Cohn as a potential successor to Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen, whose term as central bank chief expires in early February.

The change in thinking comes at a time of great uncertainty over the top ranks of the world’s most important central bank. Fed Vice Chairman Stanley Fischer said Wednesday he will resign in mid-October for personal reasons, adding another vacancy to the three others on the powerful seven-member Fed board of governors. His departure accelerates Mr. Trump’s opportunity to put his stamp on the central bank.

Candidate Trump was critical of the central bank and Ms. Yellen last year, publicly chiding her during the campaign for keeping interest rates too low, which Mr. Trump said benefited Democrats.

The shift in Mr. Cohn's prospects for the top Fed job arises largely from his criticism of Mr. Trump's response to the violence in Charlottesville, Va., the people familiar with the matter said.

The president said in the Journal interview that he was also considering whether to nominate Ms. Yellen for a second term. Mr. Trump has told people that he is impressed with Ms. Yellen, leaving them with the sense he might ask her to serve another term.

The change in Mr. Cohn's chances potentially bolsters her odds. Other names that have been discussed by Mr. Trump and his team as possible nominees to top Fed posts include former governors Lawrence Lindsey and Kevin Warsh, former BB&T Bank chief executive John Allison, and Stanford University economist John Taylor, according to people familiar with the discussions.

The White House has been considering nominating Marvin Goodfriend, a former research director at the Richmond Fed who is a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, to the Fed's board, the people familiar said. One possibility would be to nominate an incoming board member, such as Mr. Goodfriend, or a current board member, such as Fed governor Jerome Powell, to the vice-chair post.

Mr. Cohn, director of the National Economic Council, has been running the White House search for Fed chief. A senior administration official said "the president is considering several candidates." Mr. Cohn's office directed questions to the White House.

White House spokeswoman Natalie Strom said Mr. Cohn is "focused on his responsibilities...including a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to deliver meaningful tax reform that creates jobs and grows the economy." Mr. Cohn may have doomed his chances for the top Fed job with comments he made to the Financial Times last month, according to people close to the president.

The former investment banker had told associates that he was disgusted by Mr. Trump's performance immediately after the president's combative news conference on Aug. 15 about the Charlottesville events, according to a person familiar with the matter. Mr. Cohn stood near Mr. Trump at the news conference in the lobby of Trump Tower, which White House officials had intended to focus on the president's push for investment in infrastructure.

Asked if he considered resigning after the news conference, Mr. Cohn told the Financial Times that he was "reluctant to leave my post." He also said the Trump administration "can and must do better" to condemn hate groups. "Citizens standing up for equality and freedom can never be equated with white supremacists, neo-Nazis and the KKK," Mr. Cohn told the newspaper.

Mr. Trump wasn't aware such a blunt critique was coming, said one person familiar with the president's thinking. One White House official said the president visibly bristles at the mention of his economic adviser.

Mr. Trump had been eager to talk about the possibility of appointing Mr. Cohn as the next Fed chairman when he spoke about it during the Journal interview. At the time, the president said he had "gained great respect for Gary" during their time together in the West Wing.

A White House official said that Mr. Cohn, a former Goldman Sachs executive, may be able to repair his relationship with the president.

Mr. Cohn is one of the key White House hands shepherding an overhaul of the federal tax code through Congress. If successful, Mr. Cohn may find himself in better standing, the person said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Trump has nominated Randal Quarles, a private-equity executive who served in the Bush administrations, for one opening on the Fed board, but has yet to name his other picks.

A Senate committee is set to vote on Mr. Quarles' nomination as the Fed's vice chair for bank regulation on Thursday, and he is expected to ultimately win confirmation. Nominations for all board positions, including the chair and vice chair, are subject to Senate confirmation.

Mr. Fischer's departure gives the White House a wider range of options in considering how to remake the Fed, but it also adds to the challenge Mr. Trump faces in managing the leadership turnover without roiling markets.

Mr. Fischer's term as Fed vice chairman was due to end in June 2018, although his term as governor wouldn't have ended until Jan. 31, 2020. Several people who know him say he has been addressing family health issues. Mr. Fischer is planning to attend the central bank's next policy gathering Sept. 19 and Sept. 20, when the Fed is expected to announce plans to begin shrinking its portfolio of bonds and other assets accumulated during the financial crisis.

Fed officials in June raised their benchmark federal-funds rate to a range between 1% and 1.25% and penciled in one more rate increase this year. Analysts saw Mr. Fischer as a centrist voice as the Fed's second-in-command, and slightly less inclined to keep rates low to spur the economy than Ms. Yellen.

However, other policy decisions beyond December are clouded by the leadership succession question, and that uncertainty could increasingly weigh on markets.

Every president since Ronald Reagan has asked the standing Fed leader to stay in the job at the start of his presidency, which has served to underscore the central bank's relative independence from politics on monetary policy. If Mr. Trump doesn't follow that pattern, Ms. Yellen would be just the third Fed leader since 1934 to serve only one term.

Ms. Yellen hasn't said whether she would like to serve a second term, but some friends and former colleagues say her long record of public service and her devotion to the Fed are clues that she would accept a nomination if it were offered.

Nearly three in four economists surveyed by The Wall Street Journal this month said Ms. Yellen should be reappointed as Fed chair. Around two thirds of the same economists said Mr. Cohn is qualified to be chair. The Journal surveyed 56 economists from Sept. 1 to Sept. 5 in its monthly poll.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 1h

Hurricane Irma is raging but we have great teams of talented and brave people already in place and ready to help. Be careful, be safe! #FEMA

2.5K 4.8K 22K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 44m

Thank you, our great honor!

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

GOP @GOP

RT to thank @POTUS and @FLOTUS for their personal donation to the #HurricaneHarvey relief efforts.

1.7K 3.0K 12K

EPA Morning News Highlights 9.7.17

The Washington Free Beacon: EPA Workforce Approaching Lowest Levels Since Reagan

The Environmental Protection Agency will soon employ the lowest number of workers since the Ronald Reagan administration. Hundreds of employees have accepted buyouts and taken early retirement since President Donald Trump's inauguration, according to an EPA official. Congress put a cap on the number of people the EPA can employ at 15,000 in the 2017 omnibus bill. By the end of September, the EPA will employ 14,459 people, with dozens still considering buyout offers.

The Daily Caller: Nearly 50 Percent Of The EPA's Entire Workforce Are Eligible To Retire Within Next Five Years

Half of the Environmental Protection Agency's entire workforce can retire with full benefits within the next five years, according to a review of documents The Daily Caller News Foundation obtained Wednesday. Nearly 25 percent of the agency's current workforce can retire today with full benefits, while another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the documents, which were part of a wider trove of material released to Reuters and TheDCNF.

Red State: EPA Reaches Staffing Levels Not Seen Since The Reagan Administration

What is going on at the EPA is nothing short of amazing. The workforce at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is on course to fall to its lowest level since Ronald Reagan was president, an agency official said on Tuesday. After buyouts and retirements, that number could drop to 14,428 by October, the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said in an email. That would be below the fiscal 1988 level, when EPA staffing was 14,440, the official noted. A further 2,998 employees, or just over 20 percent of the total, are eligible to retire now, the official said.

The Washington Examiner: EPA staff levels to hit 30-year low this month

The Environmental Protection Agency's workforce numbers are expected to drop to levels unseen since President Ronald Reagan was in office through an employee buyout program that kicks in this month, according to an agency official. unveiled its program to begin buying out employees in June to meet President Trump's goal of reining in the agency's budget. With combined buyouts and retirements, the EPA will go from an employee ceiling of 15,000 employees to 14,428. That is below the 14,440 employees at the agency seen in fiscal year 1988 when President Reagan was still in office, the official noted.

The South Bend Tribune: EPA to test homes' soil near LaSalle Park Superfund site in South Bend

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sent nine staffers here Wednesday to deliver two messages at a public meeting about a former hazardous waste dump, but several residents who attended had a message of their own. The EPA wanted to first tell the public that soil samples taken last summer from LaSalle Park, a federal Superfund site since 2013, indicated the park is safe for recreational use, such as playing soccer, baseball, basketball, picnicking, sledding, walking and jogging. State and federal officials have known since 1984 that several industrial companies, including Bendix Corp., had dumped hazardous wastes at the site from the 1930s to the mid-1950s, before it became a park.

The Associated Press: EPA: Oklahoma Oil Company's Houston Spill Cleaned Up

A spokeswoman for the Environmental Protection Agency says a 2,500-gallon oil spill at an Oklahoma company's Houston-area facility has been cleaned up. EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said the agency had closely coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard, which reported the cleanup was completed Tuesday. An EPA news release sent Wednesday night did not include details about the spill, including whether it endangered drinking water or forced evacuations.

National Morning News Highlights 9.7.17

The Associated Press: Hurricane Irma toll hits 10, increasing threat for Florida

Fearsome Hurricane Irma cut a path of devastation across the northern Caribbean, leaving at least 10 dead and thousands homeless after destroying buildings and uprooting trees on a track Thursday that could lead to a catastrophic

strike on Florida. The most potent Atlantic Ocean hurricane ever, Irma weakened only slightly Thursday morning and remained a powerful Category 5 storm with winds of 180 mph (285 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center. The storm was increasingly likely to rip into heavily populated South Florida early Sunday, prompting the governor to declare an emergency and officials to impose mandatory evacuation orders for parts of the Miami metro area and the Florida Keys. Forecasters said it could punish the entire Atlantic coast of Florida and rage on into Georgia and South Carolina.

Bloomberg: Trump's Surprise Deal With Democrats Sets Up Christmas Showdown

President Donald Trump's unexpected decision to spurn his Republican allies in Congress by striking a short-term debt-limit deal with Democrats leaves the GOP reeling and lawmakers bracing for a bruising battle in December. Trump's move undercut GOP leaders in the House and Senate, as well as his own Treasury secretary, who had been arguing for a longer-term extension. It also left Republicans, who were blindsided by the deal, angry and disappointed with their own leaders and, to a lesser degree, Trump. "Democrats got exactly what they wanted," House Freedom Caucus head Mark Meadows said, adding that the deal "gives them the greatest leverage in the world to get exactly what they want later."

The Wall Street Journal: President Trump Unlikely to Nominate Gary Cohn to Become Fed Chairman

President Donald Trump is unlikely to nominate Gary Cohn, his top economic adviser, as the next Federal Reserve chairman, according to people familiar with the president's thinking, adding to the uncertainty over the U.S. central bank's leadership and policies next year. Mr. Trump told The Wall Street Journal in July that he was considering Mr. Cohn as a potential successor to Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen, whose term as central bank chief expires in early February. The change in thinking comes at a time of great uncertainty over the top ranks of the world's most important central bank.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/epa-workforce-approaching-lowest-levels-since-reagan/>

EPA Workforce Approaching Lowest Levels Since Reagan

By Elizabeth Harrington, 9/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency will soon employ the lowest number of workers since the Ronald Reagan administration.

Hundreds of employees have accepted buyouts and taken early retirement since President Donald Trump's inauguration, according to an EPA official.

Congress put a cap on the number of people the EPA can employ at 15,000 in the 2017 omnibus bill. By the end of September, the EPA will employ 14,459 people, with dozens still considering buyout offers.

Last month, 374 employees took buyouts. An additional 33 employees are retiring at the end of September, and 45 others are considering early retirement offers.

If half of those individuals also choose to leave the agency, EPA employment levels would fall below 14,440. The last time EPA was at an actual employment level of 14,440 was in 1988, when Ronald Reagan was president. The number of employees at EPA fell even lower in 1989, before peaking at 18,110 in 1999.

Scott Pruitt, the EPA administrator, said the agency is dedicated to shrinking the size of government. The Trump administration's goal is to cut the EPA workforce by 25 percent.

"We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," Pruitt said. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars, and staying true to our core mission of

protecting the environment and American jobs."

The agency could shrink even more, as 20.17 percent of the EPA's employees are eligible to retire right now, according to the EPA's Resources Management Office.

Another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the EPA official.

The EPA has two buyout programs, VSIP and VERA, which give employees cash payments to incentivize early retirement. Maximum payments are typically \$25,000 for employees who are over 50 and have worked at the agency for at least 20 years. The average EPA employee makes \$113,820.

Several employees who have claimed they are retiring in protest of the new Republican administration, have been eligible for early retirement.

In one case, Elizabeth Southerland, the former director of the Office of Science and Technology in EPA's Office of Water, said she was quitting on principle over President Trump's budget request to reduce the agency's spending to \$5.7 billion.

Southerland, who earned a \$250,000 salary with a \$64,000 bonus, was eligible for early retirement, and made her protest two months after the budget was released.

The NTK Network obtained an email from Southerland where she said she was retiring because of family issues, not because of Trump, Pruitt, or the budget proposal.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/09/06/nearly-50-percent-of-the-epas-entire-workforce-are-eligible-to-retire-within-next-five-years/>

Nearly 50 Percent Of The EPA's Entire Workforce Are Eligible To Retire Within Next Five Years

By Chris White, 9/6/17

Half of the Environmental Protection Agency's entire workforce can retire with full benefits within the next five years, according to a review of documents The Daily Caller News Foundation obtained Wednesday.

Nearly 25 percent of the agency's current workforce can retire today with full benefits, while another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the documents, which were part of a wider trove of material released to Reuters and TheDCNF.

The revelation comes as the EPA continues offering buyout packages to employees.

Nearly 362 EPA employees accepted a voluntary buyout, or a VERA, earlier this month, while another 12 employees retired in August, the documents show. Another 33 employees are expected to retire at the end of September, and an additional 45 employees are considering buyout offers.

EPA employment levels could tumble to 14,428, which would be lower than the 14,440-level found during the latter half of the Ronald Reagan presidency. The agency had 15,561 employees during former President Barack Obama's final term in office, all of whom earned an average salary of \$113,820. The average American income is about \$50,000.

The buyouts are helping the Trump administration reduce the size of government, EPA chief Scott Pruitt said in a statement Wednesday.

"We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," said Pruitt, who sued the agency nearly a dozen times during his time as Oklahoma's attorney general. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the

size of government ... staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs.”

Pruitt is responsible for carrying out President Donald Trump’s mission of rolling back significant portions of his Democratic predecessor’s climate agenda. He was also one of the officials who helped convince the president to leave the Paris climate agreement, which obligated the U.S. cut greenhouse gas emissions 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.

The document comes shortly after reports from July showed the EPA planned to buy out 1,227 positions, 655 of which will be from agency headquarters in Washington, D.C. EPA indicated a willingness to offer employees up to \$25,000 in cash in exchange for them leaving, which is standard practice for federal employees hoping to retire early.

The largest number of buyouts, 183, will come from the Office of Research and Development. EPA will also offer buyouts to 98 employees at the Office of Administration and Resource Management, and make the same offer to 94 workers at the Office of Land and Emergency Management.

Red State

<https://www.redstate.com/streiff/2017/09/06/epa-reaches-staffing-levels-not-seen-since-reagan-administration/>

EPA Reaches Staffing Levels Not Seen Since The Reagan Administration

By Streiff, 9/6/17

What is going on at the EPA is nothing short of amazing.

The workforce at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is on course to fall to its lowest level since Ronald Reagan was president, an agency official said on Tuesday.

After buyouts and retirements, that number could drop to 14,428 by October, the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said in an email.

That would be below the fiscal 1988 level, when EPA staffing was 14,440, the official noted. A further 2,998 employees, or just over 20 percent of the total, are eligible to retire now, the official said.

C. Northcote Parkinson, British economist and writer of age-of-sail fiction, once wrote about The Law of Multiplication of Subordinates in his essay called Parkinson’s Law. The EPA has epitomized this phenomenon. What makes it worse is that the EPA hires smart, energetic, myopic, true-believer, enviro-nazis who are not content with an “eight-and-the-gate” mentality but willingly put in extra hours to make sure you feel the hand of the Environmental Deity... and law enforcement, if need be.

Over time, the EPA has ventured out from its core functions to worrying about livestock flatulence as a cause of global warming and rating appliances on energy efficiency...when it is not causing massive toxic waste spills and running from responsibility.

Though I fully realize that this is merely another futile gesture by the Trump administration and doesn’t really count as an accomplishment because it is an act that can be changed by any future president, I do have to say the strategy of forcing the EPA to restrict its activities, despite its penchant for do-gooder nannyism and outright legal thuggery, to core functions by starving it of personnel is welcome.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-staff-levels-to-hit-30-year-low-this-month/article/2633530>

EPA staff levels to hit 30-year low this month

By John Siciliano, 9/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency's workforce numbers are expected to drop to levels unseen since President Ronald Reagan was in office through an employee buyout program that kicks in this month, according to an agency official.

EPA unveiled its program to begin buying out employees in June to meet President Trump's goal of reining in the agency's budget. With combined buyouts and retirements, the EPA will go from an employee ceiling of 15,000 employees to 14,428. That is below the 14,440 employees at the agency seen in fiscal year 1988 when President Reagan was still in office, the official noted.

Last week, 362 employees accepted voluntary buyouts and another 12 employees retired, the official said. On top of that, another 33 employees are set to retire at the end of September and 45 other employees are considering buyout offers, the officials said.

The official explained that the agency is "incredibly top-heavy" and that 25 percent of current employees are eligible to retire with full benefits today. These employees are being encouraged to retire along with another 25 percent that can retire in the next five years, the official explained.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement that he is encouraging employees to retire early. "We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," he said. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs."

With early retirements, the total number of employees let go could rise to around 3,000, which fits with Trump's budget blueprint.

Meanwhile, senior House Republicans are asking Pruitt if the buyouts are going through the necessary oversight that the Obama administration had avoided when it bought out some employees three years ago.

House Energy and Commerce Committee leaders want to be briefed on the EPA buyout plan, according to a letter to Pruitt sent Tuesday evening. Reps. Greg Walden, R-OR, chairman of the energy committee, and Tim Murphy, R-PA, chairman of committee's oversight panel, said they want to ensure that EPA's goal of finalizing these buyouts this month acts in the best interest of the taxpayer, and are worried Trump might be using the same flawed process that Obama used.

The last round of buyouts made in 2014 did not go through proper channels for approval. The EPA Office of the Inspector General said that many of the positions the previous administration provided buyouts for were not eliminated, according to the letter.

"While EPA has made some progress improving the agency's use of buyouts, given the lack of internal controls during the previous administration, the committee wants to ensure that the separation payments becoming effective in September 2017 are an efficient use of taxpayer money and are in compliance with [Office of Personnel Management] requirements," according to the letter.

Walden and Murphy want to be briefed on the buyout process by Sept. 15. "We will respond to Chairman Walden through the proper channel," an agency spokesman said.

The Southbend Tribune

http://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/epa-to-test-homes-soil-near-lasalle-park-superfund-site/article_94dd403d-6a7c-516e-9ac8-a56bab04748a.html

EPA to test homes' soil near LaSalle Park Superfund site in South Bend

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sent nine staffers here Wednesday to deliver two messages at a public meeting about a former hazardous waste dump, but several residents who attended had a message of their own.

The EPA wanted to first tell the public that soil samples taken last summer from LaSalle Park, a federal Superfund site since 2013, indicated the park is safe for recreational use, such as playing soccer, baseball, basketball, picnicking, sledding, walking and jogging. State and federal officials have known since 1984 that several industrial companies, including Bendix Corp., had dumped hazardous wastes at the site from the 1930s to the mid-1950s, before it became a park.

The agency, under a mandate from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also announced it soon wants to test soil in yards of homes near the park. Property owners must sign access agreements allowing the testing, which the EPA hopes to start by Oct. 5, issuing a final report by year's end.

The EPA wants to test soil in the yards of homes west of the park to Kenmore Street, east to Kaley Street and south to a line parallel with Newcombe Street.

But in a question-and-answer session following an EPA slideshow presentation, several people in the crowd of about 30 urged the agency to widen its scope. Tom Zmyslo said he worked at Honeywell, corporate successor to Bendix Corp., for more than 30 years, and he recalled an employee meeting in 2001 where workers were shown a map of groundwater contamination all around the plant.

Zmyslo said he is concerned that Honeywell could have contaminated drinking water wells that people still use in the Ardmore area, which is located just west of the city limits. Jenny Davison, EPA's remedial project manager for the LaSalle Park (also called Beck's Lake) site, responded that groundwater hasn't been studied at the LaSalle Park site because people living in the immediate area are served by the city's water system.

Davison said the agency welcomes any information about Honeywell's operations, and after the meeting, officials spoke further with Zmyslo.

Several other audience members said they live in homes just beyond the immediate LaSalle Park area, in some cases a block or two away, from where EPA plans to test residential yard soils, and they want their yards tested too. Davison said the EPA might consider enlarging the testing area if contamination levels are high enough in the first homes' yards.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management in 2009 found elevated levels of arsenic in the yards of nearby homes. Samples from six homes showed arsenic levels that were more than three times what could be expected to occur naturally. That was enough contamination to warrant further, more comprehensive testing, but not enough to require cleanup, said Keith Fusinski, an EPA toxicologist.

Mayor Pete Buttigieg, who in 2013 wrote the EPA a letter asking the agency to engage more with residents about the issue, did not attend the meeting but sent members of his staff.

"The EPA scheduled tonight's meeting without regard for the city's schedule," his spokesman, Mark Bode, said in a written statement. "The city plans to hold a meeting once it has received the results from the EPA and is able to share the plan for moving forward. We anticipate holding the meeting on site, at the Charles Black Recreation Center."

The Associated Press

<http://www.newson6.com/story/36308077/epa-oklahoma-oil-companys-houston-spill-cleaned-up>

EPA: Oklahoma Oil Company's Houston Spill Cleaned Up

By AP 9/7/17

A spokeswoman for the Environmental Protection Agency says a 2,500-gallon oil spill at an Oklahoma company's Houston-area facility has been cleaned up.

EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said the agency had closely coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard, which reported the cleanup was completed Tuesday.

An EPA news release sent Wednesday night did not include details about the spill, including whether it endangered drinking water or forced evacuations.

Magellan Midstream Partners spokesman Bruce Heine says his company reported the spill at its facility in the east Houston suburb of Galena Park on Sunday and has assisted in cleanup.

Heine said the spill resulted from Harvey's strike on Texas.

The Associated Press

<https://apnews.com/77a9a82f58d04bdbc122832b297b199d/Hurricane-Irma-toll-hits-10,-increasing-threat-for-Florida>

Hurricane Irma toll hits 10, increasing threat for Florida

By Danica Coto and Anika Kentish, 9/7/17

Fearsome Hurricane Irma cut a path of devastation across the northern Caribbean, leaving at least 10 dead and thousands homeless after destroying buildings and uprooting trees on a track Thursday that could lead to a catastrophic strike on Florida.

The most potent Atlantic Ocean hurricane ever, Irma weakened only slightly Thursday morning and remained a powerful Category 5 storm with winds of 180 mph (285 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

The storm was increasingly likely to rip into heavily populated South Florida early Sunday, prompting the governor to declare an emergency and officials to impose mandatory evacuation orders for parts of the Miami metro area and the Florida Keys. Forecasters said it could punish the entire Atlantic coast of Florida and rage on into Georgia and South Carolina.

"This could easily be the most costly storm in U.S. history, which is saying a lot considering what just happened two weeks ago," said Brian McNoldy, a hurricane researcher at the University of Miami, alluding to the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey.

French Interior Minister Gerard Collomb told France Info radio that eight had died and 23 injured in the country's Caribbean island territories, and he said the toll on Saint-Martin and Saint-Barthelemy could be higher because rescue teams have yet to finish their inspection of the islands.

"The reconnaissance will really start at daybreak," Collomb said.

At a news conference, Collomb also said 100,000 food rations have been sent to the islands, the equivalent of four days of supplies.

"It's a tragedy, we'll need to rebuild both islands," he said. "Most of the schools have been destroyed."

French President Emmanuel Macron's office said he will go to the islands as soon as weather conditions permit.

In the United Kingdom, the government said Irma inflicted "severe and in places critical" damage to the British overseas

territory of Anguilla. Foreign Office Minister Alan Duncan said the Caribbean island took the full force of the hurricane. He told lawmakers on Thursday that the British Virgin islands have also suffered "severe damage."

Irma blacked out much of Puerto Rico, raking the U.S. territory with heavy wind and rain while staying just out to sea, and it headed early Thursday toward the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

To the east, authorities struggled to get aid to small Caribbean islands devastated by the storm's record 185 mph (298 kph) winds. Communications were difficult with areas hit by Irma, and information on damage trickled out.

Nearly every building on Barbuda was damaged when the hurricane's core crossed almost directly over the island early Wednesday and about 60 percent of its roughly 1,400 residents were left homeless, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne told The Associated Press.

"It is just really a horrendous situation," Browne said after returning to Antigua from a plane trip to the neighboring island.

He said roads and telecommunications systems were wrecked and recovery would take months, if not years. A 2-year-old child was killed as a family tried to escape a damaged home during the storm, Browne told the AP.

One death also was reported in the nearby island of Anguilla, where officials reported extensive damage to the airport, hospitals, shelters and school and said 90 percent of roads are impassible, according to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.

The agency also reported "major damage" to houses and commercial buildings in the British Virgin Islands.

On St. Thomas in the nearby U.S. Virgin Islands, Laura Strickling spent 12 hours hunkered down with her husband and 1-year-old daughter in a boarded-up basement apartment with no power as the storm raged outside. They emerged to find the lush island in tatters. Many of their neighbors' homes were damaged and once-dense vegetation was largely gone.

"There are no leaves. It is crazy. One of the things we loved about St. Thomas is that it was so green. And it's gone," Strickling said. "It will take years for this community to get back on its feet."

Significant damage was also reported on St. Martin, an island split between French and Dutch control. Photos and video circulating on social media showed major damage to the airport in Philipsburg and the coastal village of Marigot heavily flooded. France sent emergency food and water there and to the French island of St. Bart's, where Irma ripped off roofs and knocked out electricity.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said Thursday the storm "caused widescale destruction of infrastructure, houses and businesses."

"There is no power, no gasoline, no running water. Houses are under water, cars are floating through the streets, inhabitants are sitting in the dark, in ruined houses and are cut off from the outside world," he said.

By Thursday morning, the center of the storm was about 110 miles (180 kilometers) north of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, and was moving west-northwest near 17 mph (28 kph).

More than half the island of Puerto Rico was without power, leaving 900,000 in the dark and nearly 50,000 without water, the U.S. territory's emergency management agency said in the midst of the storm. Fourteen hospitals were using generators after losing power, and trees and light poles were strewn across roads.

Puerto Rico's public power company warned before the storm hit that some areas could be left without power from four to six months because its staff has been reduced and its infrastructure weakened by the island's decade-long economic slump.

President Donald Trump approved an emergency declaration for the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, allowing the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other agencies to remove debris and give other services that will largely be paid for by the U.S. government.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center predicted Irma would remain at Category 4 or 5 for the next day or two as passes just to the north of the Dominican Republic and Haiti on Thursday, nears the Turks & Caicos and parts of the Bahamas by Thursday night and skirts Cuba on Friday night into Saturday.

It will then likely head north toward Florida, where people were rushing to board up homes, fill cars with gasoline and find a route to safety.

Gov. Rick Scott, who has mobilized parts of the state's National Guard, declared a state of emergency and asked the governors of Alabama and Georgia to waive trucking regulations so gasoline tankers can get fuel into Florida quickly to ease shortages.

An estimated 25,000 people or more left the Florida Keys after all visitors were ordered to clear out, causing bumper-to-bumper traffic on the single highway that links the chain of low-lying islands to the mainland.

Meanwhile, Hurricane Katia hovered in the southern Gulf of Mexico, threatening to hit the vulnerable Mexican coast as a Category 2 or 3 hurricane, possibly late Friday or early Saturday. It had winds of 80 mph (130 kph) and was located about 210 miles (335 kilometers) east of Tampico, Mexico.

And a third hurricane, Jose, was growing far out in the Atlantic. It was no immediate threat to land, though the forecast track showed it could affect the Irma-blasted Leeward Islands over the weekend. Hurricane Jose had winds of about 90 mph (150 kph). It was centered about 815 miles (1,310 kilometers) east of the Lesser Antilles and moving west-northwest at 18 mph (30 kph).

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-09-07/trump-s-surprise-deal-with-democrats-sets-up-christmas-showdown>

Trump's Surprise Deal With Democrats Sets Up Christmas Showdown

By Laura Litvan, Anna Edgerton, and Erik Wasson, 9/7/17

President Donald Trump's unexpected decision to spurn his Republican allies in Congress by striking a short-term debt-limit deal with Democrats leaves the GOP reeling and lawmakers bracing for a bruising battle in December.

Trump's move undercut GOP leaders in the House and Senate, as well as his own Treasury secretary, who had been arguing for a longer-term extension. It also left Republicans, who were blindsided by the deal, angry and disappointed with their own leaders and, to a lesser degree, Trump.

"Democrats got exactly what they wanted," House Freedom Caucus head Mark Meadows said, adding that the deal "gives them the greatest leverage in the world to get exactly what they want later."

During an Oval Office meeting Wednesday, Trump accepted a proposal by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and his House counterpart, Nancy Pelosi, to tie a three-month suspension of the debt limit to a Hurricane Harvey relief measure -- and throw in a stopgap continuing resolution to fund the government into December.

The episode provided the latest illustration of the bind Republicans find themselves in. Even though they control the White House and both chambers of Congress, they've been unable to set aside their own differences to get much done. Instead, this latest deal may have simply handed Democrats the upper hand heading into a confrontational end-of-the-year negotiation.

The agreement sets up what could be a major fight in December over government funding that is expected to include Trump's proposed border wall with Mexico and his decision to end a program that lets young undocumented immigrants stay in the U.S., as well as perhaps the debt ceiling.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, who was in the meeting with Trump, didn't see it coming. Hours before Trump's deal, he had told reporters that the Democratic proposal for a short-term debt limit deal would be "unworkable" and "ridiculous."

By late Wednesday, Senate Republicans released a new version of a Harvey aid bill that included the debt ceiling extension and would fund the government through Dec. 8. It also would nearly double the total disaster funding to \$15.25 billion from what the House passed earlier in the day. The additional funding would go toward the Community Development Block Grant program to address housing needs in disaster zones.

Extraordinary Measures

The actual fight over the debt limit could slip into 2018, since the Treasury Department can usually deploy so-called extraordinary measures to extend its ability to operate. The drop-dead date could come as early as February if tax refund outlays are "relatively high," according to Jefferies economists Ward McCarthy and Thomas Simons.

Trump's deal with Democrats did soothe the most immediate concerns in the short-term Treasury market, with rates on Treasury bills maturing around the previous late-September debt-limit deadline plunging. But they surged on securities coming due around mid-December, suggesting Wall Street sees more legislative strife ahead.

"All this really means is that while it's unlikely the U.S. would ever default on Treasury bills, this move today just pushes this risk further out the curve," said Jerome Schneider, head of the short-term and funding desk at Pacific Investment Management Co., which manages \$1.6 trillion in assets.

The White House tried to sell the deal as a way to "clear the decks" for a tax overhaul, as Trump's legislative director, Marc Short, put it to reporters.

Longer-term Treasuries also declined, suggesting investors saw better prospects that lawmakers will act on measures to spur economic growth.

"The market is pricing in less gridlock in Washington," said Alex Li, head of rates strategy at Credit Agricole. "The market seems to be suggesting that the administration and congressional leaders are more open now to get something done in terms of the legislative agenda," including addressing the nation's tax system.

But conservatives were fuming over the deal, with one senior Republican aide saying that the deal undercut GOP leaders and bolstered the power of Democrats in Congress.

Asked about the compromise, Freedom Caucus member Ted Yoho of Florida said sarcastically, "It's great to be in the majority."

'Deal is Bad'

"The Pelosi-Schumer-Trump deal is bad," Republican Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska said in a statement.

Trump himself might have agreed, at least back in 2013 when he was still considering a run for the White House. He wrote on Twitter then, "The worst negotiators in history (otherwise known as Republicans) have just offered to suspend debt ceiling for four months. Pathetic!"

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell tried to put the best face on the deal while noting that Trump cut it with Democratic leaders.

"The president can speak for himself," McConnell told reporters. "But his feeling was that we needed to come together, to not create a picture of divisiveness at a time of genuine national crisis."

Congress is rushing to pass Hurricane Harvey relief funds by the end of the week because the Federal Emergency Management Agency's disaster-relief fund is set to run out of money Friday as a more powerful storm, Hurricane Irma, bears down on Florida.

The House voted 419-3 on Wednesday to pass \$7.85 billion to provide relief to tens of thousands of homeowners from flooding caused by Harvey in Texas and other parts of the Gulf Coast. The measure includes \$7.4 billion in FEMA disaster funds and \$450 million for the Small Business Administration. Additional FEMA funding is to be provided later, according to House aides.

Shortly after the vote, Trump and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin met with Republican and Democratic congressional leaders at the White House. McConnell, Ryan and Mnuchin pushed for adding a debt-limit extension of as long as 18 months to the Harvey bill, according to several people with knowledge of the discussion. A three-month debt-limit deal was the last thing Mnuchin wanted, an administration official said.

But Trump said he wanted a deal, and he accepted the Democrats' offer of a three-month debt-limit measure, one person said. At that point, McConnell stepped in to say a short-term government spending bill should also be added.

Several leaders of conservative groups said they blamed Republican leaders, not Trump, for the deal to add the debt-limit and spending measures to the House bill. They said McConnell and Ryan hadn't been able to push forward a conservative plan to raise the debt limit in a measure that cut spending.

"This is going to be very bad for our common goal of fundamental tax reform," Adam Brandon, president of the conservative FreedomWorks group, told reporters in a conference call. "This deal is straight out of the swamp."

'Taken Aback'

"I'm a little taken aback by it," said Representative Mark Walker, the North Carolina Republican who chairs the Republican Study Committee. "Usually you get a heads up" on a major policy decision.

Asked if this deal undercuts Republican leadership's ability to negotiate with Democrats, Walker replied, "It does."

Walker said he will present a letter to Ryan on Thursday with a list of policy suggestions that would get more Republicans to support a debt limit deal. It will contain 19 specific suggestions, he said.

Republicans appeared resigned to the notion that the combined measure would likely pass both chambers of Congress, carried by Democratic votes. But a number of Republicans said they would vote against it.

The attempt to tie the Harvey aid passed in the House to the debt limit "is a poison pill & a disservice to those who are suffering," Representative Richard Hudson of North Carolina tweeted. He said the Senate should pass the House measure without adding more provisions.

FAA and Flood Insurance

The deal still left out a few key priorities that Congress will have to address by the end of the month. Lawmakers still need to pass an authorization for the Federal Aviation Administration so that it can keep operating after Sept. 30. They also have to pass a renewal of the nation's flood insurance program, a high priority in the wake of Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma.

Democrats, for their part, luxuriated in the unexpected win.

"Today was a good day in a generally very partisan town," Schumer told reporters. "And let's hope we can continue to work together for the good of Americans, for the good of the working families who so much need our help."

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/president-trump-unlikely-to-nominate-gary-cohn-to-become-fed-chairman-1504731461>

President Trump Unlikely to Nominate Gary Cohn to Become Fed Chairman

By Michael C. Bender, Harriet Torrey, and Nick Timiraos, 9/6/17

President Donald Trump is unlikely to nominate Gary Cohn, his top economic adviser, as the next Federal Reserve chairman, according to people familiar with the president's thinking, adding to the uncertainty over the U.S. central bank's leadership and policies next year.

Mr. Trump told The Wall Street Journal in July that he was considering Mr. Cohn as a potential successor to Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen, whose term as central bank chief expires in early February.

The change in thinking comes at a time of great uncertainty over the top ranks of the world's most important central bank. Fed Vice Chairman Stanley Fischer said Wednesday he will resign in mid-October for personal reasons, adding another vacancy to the three others on the powerful seven-member Fed board of governors. His departure accelerates Mr. Trump's opportunity to put his stamp on the central bank.

Candidate Trump was critical of the central bank and Ms. Yellen last year, publicly chiding her during the campaign for keeping interest rates too low, which Mr. Trump said benefited Democrats.

The shift in Mr. Cohn's prospects for the top Fed job arises largely from his criticism of Mr. Trump's response to the violence in Charlottesville, Va., the people familiar with the matter said.

The president said in the Journal interview that he was also considering whether to nominate Ms. Yellen for a second term. Mr. Trump has told people that he is impressed with Ms. Yellen, leaving them with the sense he might ask her to serve another term.

The change in Mr. Cohn's chances potentially bolsters her odds. Other names that have been discussed by Mr. Trump and his team as possible nominees to top Fed posts include former governors Lawrence Lindsey and Kevin Warsh, former BB&T Bank chief executive John Allison, and Stanford University economist John Taylor, according to people familiar with the discussions.

The White House has been considering nominating Marvin Goodfriend, a former research director at the Richmond Fed who is a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, to the Fed's board, the people familiar said. One possibility would be to nominate an incoming board member, such as Mr. Goodfriend, or a current board member, such as Fed governor Jerome Powell, to the vice-chair post.

Mr. Cohn, director of the National Economic Council, has been running the White House search for Fed chief. A senior administration official said “the president is considering several candidates.” Mr. Cohn’s office directed questions to the White House.

White House spokeswoman Natalie Strom said Mr. Cohn is “focused on his responsibilities...including a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to deliver meaningful tax reform that creates jobs and grows the economy.” Mr. Cohn may have doomed his chances for the top Fed job with comments he made to the Financial Times last month, according to people close to the president.

The former investment banker had told associates that he was disgusted by Mr. Trump’s performance immediately after the president’s combative news conference on Aug. 15 about the Charlottesville events, according to a person familiar with the matter. Mr. Cohn stood near Mr. Trump at the news conference in the lobby of Trump Tower, which White House officials had intended to focus on the president’s push for investment in infrastructure.

Asked if he considered resigning after the news conference, Mr. Cohn told the Financial Times that he was “reluctant to leave my post.” He also said the Trump administration “can and must do better” to condemn hate groups. “Citizens standing up for equality and freedom can never be equated with white supremacists, neo-Nazis and the KKK,” Mr. Cohn told the newspaper.

Mr. Trump wasn’t aware such a blunt critique was coming, said one person familiar with the president’s thinking. One White House official said the president visibly bristles at the mention of his economic adviser.

Mr. Trump had been eager to talk about the possibility of appointing Mr. Cohn as the next Fed chairman when he spoke about it during the Journal interview. At the time, the president said he had “gained great respect for Gary” during their time together in the West Wing.

A White House official said that Mr. Cohn, a former Goldman Sachs executive, may be able to repair his relationship with the president.

Mr. Cohn is one of the key White House hands shepherding an overhaul of the federal tax code through Congress. If successful, Mr. Cohn may find himself in better standing, the person said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Trump has nominated Randal Quarles, a private-equity executive who served in the Bush administrations, for one opening on the Fed board, but has yet to name his other picks.

A Senate committee is set to vote on Mr. Quarles’ nomination as the Fed’s vice chair for bank regulation on Thursday, and he is expected to ultimately win confirmation. Nominations for all board positions, including the chair and vice chair, are subject to Senate confirmation.

Mr. Fischer’s departure gives the White House a wider range of options in considering how to remake the Fed, but it also adds to the challenge Mr. Trump faces in managing the leadership turnover without roiling markets.

Mr. Fischer’s term as Fed vice chairman was due to end in June 2018, although his term as governor wouldn’t have ended until Jan. 31, 2020. Several people who know him say he has been addressing family health issues. Mr. Fischer is planning to attend the central bank’s next policy gathering Sept. 19 and Sept. 20, when the Fed is expected to announce plans to begin shrinking its portfolio of bonds and other assets accumulated during the financial crisis.

Fed officials in June raised their benchmark federal-funds rate to a range between 1% and 1.25% and penciled in one more rate increase this year. Analysts saw Mr. Fischer as a centrist voice as the Fed’s second-in-command, and slightly less inclined to keep rates low to spur the economy than Ms. Yellen.

However, other policy decisions beyond December are clouded by the leadership succession question, and that uncertainty could increasingly weigh on markets.

Every president since Ronald Reagan has asked the standing Fed leader to stay in the job at the start of his presidency, which has served to underscore the central bank's relative independence from politics on monetary policy. If Mr. Trump doesn't follow that pattern, Ms. Yellen would be just the third Fed leader since 1934 to serve only one term.

Ms. Yellen hasn't said whether she would like to serve a second term, but some friends and former colleagues say her long record of public service and her devotion to the Fed are clues that she would accept a nomination if it were offered.

Nearly three in four economists surveyed by The Wall Street Journal this month said Ms. Yellen should be reappointed as Fed chair. Around two thirds of the same economists said Mr. Cohn is qualified to be chair. The Journal surveyed 56 economists from Sept. 1 to Sept. 5 in its monthly poll.

TRUMP TWEETS



To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 9/28/2017 11:17:29 PM
Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

Back

7 Messages

Definers -- Clips

We're fully registered...

Registration Details for Complete Record	
Entity Name: DEFINERS CORP	
DUNS Number:	076234313
CAGE:	7YAE9
Address:	
1500 WILSON BLVD # 5	
ARLINGTON, VA 22209-2458	
UNITED STATES	
Purpose of Registration:	All Awards
Registration Status:	Active
Expiration Date:	08/31/2018
Address Update Required:	No
<div> </div>	

On Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 3:29

PM, Wilcox, Jahan

<wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:



Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 28, 2017, at 6:33 PM, Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov> wrote:

Hi Jahan

Can you forward me the screen shot so I can send it to contracts thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 6:27 PM

To: Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

Great. Adding Nancy and Liz.

On Sep 28, 2017, at 4:11 PM, Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com> wrote:

We're fully registered...

<Screen Shot 2017-09-28 at 4.23.59 PM.png>

On Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 3:29 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

HI –

Working with contracts on this – here is the remaining issue that the contracting officer brought to me yesterday --

Specifically, the vendor is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). In order for any vendor to receive a contract from the federal government, they must be registered in this system. The vendor seems to be reluctant to register.

George had been working with the vendor on this. I have a call into the vendor as they may need assistance in completing the forms.

Will update you as soon as I hear from the vendor.

Thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:02 PM

To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>

Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Definers -- Clips

Importance: High

Where are we on this and when can we get this going? Today is a day where we could really use their help capturing clips in real time. This is very important and our wait and the process to do this has been way too long. Thank you!

Jahan Wilcox

EPA

Strategic Communications Advisor

Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)

Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definerscorp.com

571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Wed 10/25/2017 7:03:05 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Lanza joins CNN — Recent lobbying breakups — Firehouse adds two

By Theodoric Meyer | 10/25/2017 03:02 PM EDT

With David Beavers, Aubree Eliza Weaver and Daniel Lippman

FIRST IN PI - LANZA JOINS CNN: **Bryan Lanza**, a managing director at **Mercury** and a veteran of President **Donald Trump's** campaign and transition teams, is joining **CNN** as a contributor on a one-year contract. He'll be "one of the Republican voices and prominent Trump supporters" on the network, alongside **Jason Miller**, another veteran of the Trump campaign and transition who's now a managing director at **Teneo**, and other pro-Trump contributors. Lanza joined Mercury in February and lobbies for eight clients, according to disclosure reports.

NOTABLE BREAKUPS: The third-quarter filing deadline brought a rush of lobbying termination reports. Here are few that stood out: **Novartis** parted ways with **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck** after hiring the firm in May to lobby on tax reform and health care. Novartis spent \$1.1 million on lobbying in the third quarter and continues to retain a dozen other Washington lobbying firms.

- **Invariant**, which has lobbied for **Snap** (aka Snapchat) since 2014, is no longer representing the company. Snap signed **Monument Policy Group** in March and registered its first in-house lobbyist, **Gina Woodworth**, this month. And **American Express** parted ways with **Venable**, which has lobbied for the company since 2015. American Express hired **Rich Feuer Anderson** last month and also retains **Ernst & Young** to lobby on tax reform, among other issues.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Tips: tmeyer@politico.com. Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

TAX REFORM UPDATE: "Changes to retirement savings are coming, the House's top tax writer said Wednesday, despite a tweet earlier this week from President Donald Trump that there would be no changes to 401(k)s," **POLITICO's Aaron Lorenzo** reports. "The comments by House Ways and Means Chairman **Kevin Brady** (R-Texas) indicate the rift over the issue is far from settled as House Republicans prepare to release their tax reform bill next week. Brady's Senate counterpart, Finance Chairman **Orrin Hatch** (R-Utah), separately said when asked about Brady's comments: 'I'm open to looking at anything. I don't have any problem looking at everything.'" Members of the **American Society of Pension Professionals and Actuaries** pressed members of Brady's and Hatch's committees not to make such changes during their fly-in, PI noted yesterday. [Full story](#).

FIREHOUSE ADDS TWO: **Firehouse Strategies**, the public affairs firm formed by three veterans of Sen. **Marco Rubio's** presidential campaign, is adding two new associates: **Letty Burgin** and **Will May**. Burgin previously worked for Florida state Rep. **Brad Drake**. May was previously an intern for Sen. **Richard Burr** (R-N.C.) and Reps. **Phil Roe** (R-Tenn.) and **Leonard Lance** (R-N.J.). Firehouse also moved into new offices on New York Avenue.

PRIEBUS REJOINS OLD FIRM: Reince Priebus is heading back to his old law firm, **Michael Best & Friedrich**, as president and chief strategist, **POLITICO's Josh Dawsey** reports. "He will lead the firm's government affairs group, consulting for corporate clients, but Priebus said he will not do any lobbying work and doesn't plan to register as a lobbyist. Priebus also said he won't work for foreign governments. He says he sees his role as helping clients understand how to make progress with Trump, on Capitol Hill and in government agencies - all people and places he was intimately intertwined with until this summer." Priebus will also give paid speeches. Full story.

JOBS REPORT

- The **U.S. Travel Association** is adding **Tori Barnes** as senior vice president of government relations. She'll report to **Jonathan Grella**, the group's executive vice president for public affairs. Barnes was previously a top lobbyist for **General Motors**.
- The **American Society of Travel Agents** has promoted **Eben Peck** to executive vice president for advocacy. He was previously senior vice president of government and industry affairs.
- **David Molina** has joined **Ward Circle Strategies** as an associate, working on communications for clients including the DoD and HHS. He was previously a legislative specialist at **Molina Healthcare**.

SPOTTED: At a shindig celebrating the promotion of **Julie Hershey Carr** and **Randi Reid** to partners at **Kountoupes Denham Carr & Reid** as well as the firm's 10-year anniversary last night at 101 Constitution Avenue, according to a PI tipster: Sens. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Chris Coons (D-Del.) and Gary Peters (D-Mich.); Reps. Lloyd Smucker (R-Pa.) and Derek Kilmer (D-Wash.); **Bill Hughes** of House Majority Whip Steve Scalise's leadership office and **Megan Miller** of Scalise's personal office; **Bill Sweeney** of the Senate Democratic Policy and Communications Committee; **David Cleary** of Sen. Lamar Alexander's office and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee; **Pat Hayes** of Sen. Joe Manchin's office; **Sarah Benzing** of Brown's office; **Eric Feldman** of Peters' office; **Jon Stahler** of Coons' office; **Allison Martin** of Alexander's office; **Tara Shaw** of Enzi's office; **James Decker** of Rep. Michael Burgess's office; **Melissa Froehlich** and **Kim Trzeciak** of the House Energy and Commerce Committee; **Mark Henson** of Rep. Jim Himes's office; **Joel Bailey** of Rep. Jimmy Panetta's office; **Aaron Schmidt** of Rep. Suzan DelBene's office; **Ashli Palmer** of CVS; **Katie Yehl** and **Will Otero** of Volvo; **Tom Manatos** of Spotify; **Parker Brugge** of Best Buy; **Alyssa Betz** of Oath; **Emily Duncan** and **Jackie Carney** of Exelon; and **Elizabeth Pika Sharp** and **Duane Wright** of AdvaMed.

- At a **Brad Paisley** concert last night at the **American Trucking Associations'** annual show in Orlando (where Transportation Secretary **Elaine Chao** and Labor Secretary **Alexander Acosta** spoke earlier in the week), according to a PI tipster: **Mike Ducker** of **FedEx Freight**; **Tom Jensen** of **UPS**; **Dave Manning** of **TCW**, who's the incoming ATA chairman; and **Sue Hensley** and **Bill Sullivan** of the ATA.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

Alabama 2017 Senate Victory Committee, A Joint Fundraising Committee Comprised of Judge Roy Moore for U.S. Senate, the Alabama Republican Party, RNC, and NRSC (Roy Moore, Alabama Republican Party, RNC, NRSC)
Upton Victory Committee (Rep. Fred Upton, TRUST PAC Team Republicans for Utilizing Sensible Tactics)

NEW PACs:

Our Superpac Foundation (Unknown)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Arent Fox LLP: OFO US Limited
Arent Fox LLP: RH energytrans, LLC
Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP: Patient Access Network Foundation
Foley & Lardner LLP: Dr. Gottfried Kellermann
Haake Fetzer: American Gem Trade Association
Health Policy Source, Inc.: Secure-US Aco, LLC
Lungren Lopina LLC: AMPAC Fine Chemicals
Roberti Global (fka Roberti White, LLC): First Data Corporation
The Federal Group, Inc.: MDxHealth
The McKeon Group, Inc.: National Center for Families Learning
The McKeon Group, Inc.: Parents as Teachers (PAT)

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Armory Hill Advocates (formerly known as Rawlson Policy Group): Optimal Wellness Health Homecare, LLC
Armory Hill Advocates (formerly known as Rawlson Policy Group): Trustworthy Home Health Care
Banner Public Affairs, LLC: Fincantieri Marine Group
Banner Public Affairs, LLC: Tata America International Corporation
Keystone Public Affairs, LLC: Contra Costa Transportation Authority
Keystone Public Affairs, LLC: KCF Technologies, Inc.
Keystone Public Affairs, LLC: PNT Holdings, Inc
Keystone Public Affairs, LLC: Rural Air Service Alliance, Inc.
Keystone Public Affairs, LLC: Seacoast Science, Inc.
Keystone Public Affairs, LLC: Utility Composite Solutions International, Inc.
Powers Pyles Sutter & Verville, P.C.: American Academy Of Orthopaedic Surgeons
Powers Pyles Sutter & Verville, P.C.: American Joint Replacement Registry
Scenic America: Scenic America
US Policy Strategies: Community Financial Services Association of America

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-influence/2017/10/25/lanza-joins-cnn-223001>

To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings>

This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Emily Holden
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:51:12 PM
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

So you're saying that you ended the contract because Definers was too expensive? Because they're saying they were becoming a distraction because of the news stories.

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](https://www.instagram.com/emilyhholden)

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:43 PM
To: Emily Holden <eholden@politico.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Emily Holden [mailto:eholden@politico.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:28 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers contract?

Is it true EPA is ending the contract?

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](#)

To: Greaves, Holly[greaves.holly@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 2/9/2018 6:13:07 PM
Subject: RE: APPROVAL: Holly,

Great!

From: Greaves, Holly
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 1:13 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: APPROVAL: Holly,

Could you also add, "Decisions on office reductions, if needed, will be made based on the final FY2018 budget."?

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 1:09 PM
To: Greaves, Holly <greaves.holly@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: APPROVAL: Holly,

I'm just going to say this:

Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

"No, this is not accurate." EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 12:58 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every employee, to EPA’s Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words “climate change” were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **“Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focused on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **“Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **“No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **“We don’t discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9 Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: @pfimrite

To: Friedman, Lisa[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:45:40 PM
Subject: RE: well, then on a different subject...

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:42 PM
To: 'Friedman, Lisa' <lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>
Cc: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: well, then on a different subject...

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Friedman, Lisa [<mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: well, then on a different subject...

Got a comment about Definers dropping out of the contract?

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
Cc: Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Letendre, Daisy[letendre.daisy@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Bennett, Tate
Sent: Fri 10/20/2017 4:31:53 PM
Subject: Re: Good line from Fox interview

Adding Jahan

Sent from my iPad

> On Oct 20, 2017, at 12:31 PM, Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov> wrote:

>

> Nice, we need to find this clip. Was this radio or TV? Jahan, do I need to ask Nancy again about definers?

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Bennett, Tate

> Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 12:27 PM

> To: Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Letendre, Daisy <letendre.daisy@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

> Subject: Good line from Fox interview

>

> Critics have suggested the EPA chief would be hesitant to take on the pair of Fortune 500 companies financially responsible for the expensive cleanup. But today Pruitt emphatically pledged the full authority of his agency to force an effective cleanup.

>

> Sent from my iPad

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov];
jpounder@definercorp.com[jpounder@definercorp.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 6/19/2017 1:37:51 PM
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...
5.22.17 Definers EPA Monitoring Proposal.pdf

George –

I am adding you to this email. Can you please contact Joe Pounder and circle back with me. I believe Definers is able to do morning summaries or morning media matrixs that we can circulate within the agency to interested people and they are also capable of doing live-time alerts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Thank you,

Jahan

From: Joe Pounder [mailto:jpounder@definercorp.com]
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2017 5:26 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Updated Proposal...

Mr. Wilcox,

Please find attached an updated proposal with examples of actual alerts and daily matrix. Please let us know if you have any other questions. Our plan is when it is rolled out to clients, these alerts will be compiled into our Definers Console where they will be also stored and searchable in addition to emailed directly to inboxes. Thanks again.

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definercorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Beach, Christopher[beach.christopher@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tue 3/13/2018 2:07:07 PM
Subject: RE: Morning Energy, presented by Chevron: Special election overtakes coal country — Zinke heads to the Hill — Bishop calls out PREPA

Nice, James, please add this summary to the top of the email that you are sending to Helen.

From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2018 9:15 AM
To: Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Beach, Christopher <beach.christopher@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Morning Energy, presented by Chevron: Special election overtakes coal country — Zinke heads to the Hill — Bishop calls out PREPA

Kelsey included the regional roundtable coverage in Morning Energy.

ROUNDTABLE ROUND-UP: With stacks of his "[year in review](#)" document piled high, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt held a "[regional roundtable](#)" with reporters Monday morning to discuss the year ahead and his achievements to date. Here are some of the stories that emerged from the roundtable:

— Pruitt said he would sign a waiver allowing blends of 15 percent ethanol gasoline if he can do so legally, via the [Houston Chronicle](#).

— By month's end, Pruitt plans to have reviewed about 400 claims filed over damages sustained during the 2015 Gold King Mine disaster, via [The Denver Post](#).

— In states like Nevada, Pruitt touted the need for regulatory rollbacks to help economically, via the [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#).

— A final move on Missouri's West Lake Superfund site could include excavating more than the 67 percent of the site, via the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#).

From: POLITICO Pro Energy [mailto:politicoemail@politicopro.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2018 5:48 AM
To: Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by Chevron: Special election overtakes coal country — Zinke heads to the Hill — Bishop calls out PREPA

By Kelsey Tamborrino | 03/13/2018 05:45 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff, Ben Lefebvre and Daniel Lippman

IT'S SPECIAL ELECTION DAY: Voters in southeastern Pennsylvania will pick their new member of Congress today, and Democrats are hoping for a surprise upset in the coal country district that President Donald Trump won handily. The 18th District special election pits Republican Rick Saccone and Democrat Conor Lamb, and the latest polls show Lamb leading in the heavily blue-collar area, left open by the resignation of Republican incumbent Rep. Tim Murphy. Trump carried the district by 20 points in 2016.

On energy issues, Lamb lists "modern energy development" as one of his priorities, with calls for increased natural gas-extraction jobs. Lamb says government should not impede energy development and job creation, according to his website, but notes the need for government "to enforce the law and hold companies accountable if they endanger workers or pollute our air or water." For his part, Saccone hasn't laid out his energy priorities on his campaign site, but he's previously touted coal production and hit EPA for its regulations during his time as a state lawmaker.

Lamb, a Marine and former federal prosecutor, spent Sunday with the United Mine Workers of America, where he spoke directly to retired coal miners on pensions and Social Security, the Associated Press reported. "People have paid into these programs over the course of a lifetime," Laid said, some 40 miles outside of Pittsburgh. "I do not believe, as [House Speaker] Paul Ryan does, that these are entitlements or another form of welfare."

Meanwhile, Saccone, a 60-year-old state legislator and retired Air Force officer, garnered support from the president, who stumped for him at a Saturday rally and tweeted another endorsement Monday morning. "Let's get someone from the heart of coal country, supporting your families, values and concerns," Saccone said of himself, before the president arrived Saturday. "I'm battle-tested and ready to serve." Saccone also joined Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke last month at an event just outside the district to announce new grants to clean up coal mines in the state, an appearance that has led Democrats to call for an investigation into whether Zinke violated the Hatch Act.

For Lamb to win the toss-up race, he'll need to run up his totals in Allegheny County, where

Pittsburgh bleeds into the suburbs, Campaign Pro's Elena Schneider reports. The Democrat has spent a lot of time in Greene County, home to coal miners who were "really anti-Hillary," but are "open to Conor," said Rich Yakubic, a 67-year-old member of the UMWA, who attended Lamb's rally Sunday. Elena breaks down what else to watch tonight [here](#).

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino, and the Renewable Fuels Association's Rachel Gantz was first to know former President Calvin Coolidge never used a telephone while in office. For today: Who was the only president to have no turnover in his Cabinet? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to ktamborrino@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@kelseytam](#), [@Morning_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

***POLITICO Space** is our new, free weekly briefing on the policies and personalities shaping the second space age in Washington and beyond. Sign up today to start receiving the newsletter right at launch on April 6.*

ZINKE HEADS TO THE HILL: Zinke heads to Capitol Hill today for a Senate Energy [hearing](#) on the administration's fiscal 2019 budget proposal for DOI. Democrats will likely ask Zinke about his use of [public funds](#), as well as reports of [conflicts of interest](#) for the former Montana congressman. Expect Democrats to also press the secretary on the state of Interior's offshore drilling plan, and whether public input at his agency is being heard. **If you go:** The hearing begins at 10 a.m. in 336 Dirksen. Watch it [here](#).

NO SYMPOSIUM FOR ZINKE: Interior has canceled Zinke's appearance at the Energy & Environmental Symposium scheduled for Wednesday, event organizer Faegre Baker Daniels confirmed. The cancellation also comes after questions were raised about Faegre's [lobbying](#) for the reduction of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah on behalf of energy companies. Faegre is also where [Andrew Wheeler](#) — Trump's stalled pick for EPA's No. 2 spot — works as a principal. For those still jonesing for a Zinke fix after today's hearing, the secretary is scheduled to testify to the House Natural Resources Committee at 10 a.m. Thursday.

Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Joe Balash will speak in Zinke's place Wednesday, a Faegre spokeswoman said. Updated guidance can be found [here](#).

WHITEHOUSE HITS 200: Seventeen Democratic senators, including Minority Leader [Chuck Schumer](#), will join [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) today as he delivers his 200th weekly address to the upper chamber. Since April 2012, Whitehouse has delivered remarks from the floor every week on various aspects of man-made climate change.

**** A message from Chevron:** At our Refinery Optimization Center in El Segundo, we're using advanced technologies to help monitor operations and deliver safer energy. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2Ge73Qw> **

HOUSE COMMITTEE CALLS OUT PREPA: The House Natural Resources Committee sent a letter to Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority's interim executive director on Monday, outlining recent allegations of "corruption and gross mismanagement" with the island's power restoration operations. "A member of the committee has heard from constituents currently

working to restore power in Puerto Rico under [agreements with other electric utilities], that utility crews are delayed or unable to complete electrification projects because of a lack of materials" from PREPA, says the letter, signed by Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) and Republicans [Bruce Westerman](#) and [Doug LaMalfa](#).

The letter cites an incident in which FEMA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel raided a warehouse storing repair materials that PREPA did not acknowledge existed, Pro's Colin Wilhelm [reports](#). Local media in Puerto Rico have also alleged that PREPA officials received bribes from local strip club owners to give them priority in power restoration, and ordered power restored to their own homes before other critical infrastructure. The lawmakers, whose panel has jurisdiction over Puerto Rico and other territories, want more information from PREPA about any open investigations it has into alleged misappropriation of resources or bribery by March 26. Read it [here](#).

Meanwhile in the Virgin Islands: FEMA recommitted Monday to complete its long-haul response in the U.S. Virgin Islands, following damage from Hurricanes Irma and Maria to the islands last summer. "We will be on the job until the territory tells us we've completed our work," said William Vogel, who serves as FEMA's coordinator for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Read more [here](#) from Pro's Quint Forgey.

GOP WON'T BLOCK TARIFFS: Don't expect Republicans to do anything about the steel and aluminum tariffs they've spent the better half of the month worrying about — at least for now. GOP leaders signaled Monday that they won't try to pass legislation to override a president of their own party, POLITICO's Burgess Everett [reports](#). Instead, they are hoping they can get the president to water down the tariffs, which have drawn condemnation from many in the energy industry. "That's clearly a long shot. But we're trying as best we can to persuade folks in the administration to scale this back to make it less harmful," said Sen. [John Thune](#), the No. 3 GOP senator. "I don't think we can rely on Democrats. And moving something across the floor takes 60. And then you'd have to override a veto."

EPA SPARES PHILLY REFINER IN BANKRUPTCY SETTLEMENT: EPA will allow bankrupt refinery Philadelphia Energy Solutions to meet only a portion of its outstanding obligation under the Renewable Fuel Standard as part of a [settlement filed](#) with the Bankruptcy Court in Delaware Monday. PES has blamed its financial failure on the RFS, and its bankruptcy spurred a series of meetings at the White House about how to resolve tensions between biofuel producers and some oil refiners over the program. In the future, PES will be expected to submit credits every six months, instead of annually. Reuters first broke the [news](#) of the settlement.

"EPA's action in the PES case just demonstrate the Agency's acknowledgement that RINs are the primary cause of PES' bankruptcy and the main impediment to its future viability," a refining source who is concerned about high compliance costs tells ME. The source added that the settlement does not change the need for substantial changes to the program in order to prevent PES from being "right back in the soup" next year.

Biofuels producers are irate. "We are evaluating the settlement and will comment on the proposal," Bob Dinneen, CEO of the Renewable Fuels Association, told ME in a statement. "But

at first blush, this strikes us as rewarding bombast behavior and it sets an extraordinarily bad precedent."

ROUNDTABLE ROUND-UP: With stacks of his "[year in review](#)" document piled high, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt held a "[regional roundtable](#)" with reporters Monday morning to discuss the year ahead and his achievements to date. Here are some of the stories that emerged from the roundtable:

— Pruitt said he would sign a waiver allowing blends of 15 percent ethanol gasoline if he can do so legally, via the [Houston Chronicle](#).

— By month's end, Pruitt plans to have reviewed about 400 claims filed over damages sustained during the 2015 Gold King Mine disaster, via [The Denver Post](#).

— In states like Nevada, Pruitt touted the need for regulatory rollbacks to help economically, via the [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#).

— A final move on Missouri's West Lake Superfund site could include excavating more than the 67 percent of the site, via the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#).

STATES CONTINUE THE FIGHT: The fight over Zinke's offshore drilling plan continues to play out on the state level, with officials vowing to fight the proposal by any means necessary, POLITICO New York's Danielle Muoio and Marie French report. Lawmakers hailing from California to New York are considering ways to block the proposal, the pair reports, including "laws to block the construction of pipelines or infrastructure in state-controlled waters that are needed to support drilling projects." Attorneys general have vowed to sue over Zinke's proposal at the earliest possible moment, while state agencies plan to object to any lease sales using their joint authority under federal law over coastal waters. Read more [here](#).

NELSON HOPES FOR NEW NASA PICK: With news of the acting head of NASA's retirement at the end of April, Florida Sen. [Bill Nelson](#) has called on the White House to re-do its nomination to head the agency permanently. "The White House needs to nominate a space professional for NASA administrator who will actually garner strong bipartisan support. The current nominee doesn't have the votes," Nelson said in a [statement](#) on Robert Lightfoot's retirement. Lightfoot led the agency while the Senate has failed to confirm the administration's permanent choice: Oklahoma Rep. [Jim Bridenstine](#), who was formally nominated in September and has been unable to win Democratic support due in part to his denial of climate change.

ROCKEFELLER-BACKED GROUP RECOMMENDS ON POLICY: The Rockefeller Foundation-created initiative, 100 Resilient Cities, today released a series of recommendations in four policy areas, including infrastructure and flood insurance. The recommendations, which have been endorsed by mayors in Boston, Pittsburgh, Miami and Honolulu, outline specific strategies for improvement, including the creation of "a national infrastructure bank to further private investments in resilience," as well as a coordinated effort by departments and agencies to increase efficiency of disaster response, by integrating future forecast and scenario data and analysis into decision-making, among other ideas. Read it [here](#).

MAIL CALL! BRING BACK THE TAX CREDIT: Ahead of this week's Ways and Means [hearing](#) on tax extenders, the National Biodiesel Board, and 45 other groups, sent a letter to congressional leadership, calling for the reinstatement of the biodiesel tax credit for 2018. Read it [here](#).

HAPPY SUNSHINE WEEK: Nonprofit watchdog group Cause of Action Institute sent a letter to Zinke on Monday taking issue with a September report from BLM on improving planning and NEPA processes, which called for "expanded exemptions" under the Freedom of Information Act. CoA called on Interior to rescind the recommendation and "recommit itself to operating in an open and transparent fashion in accordance with the FOIA." Read it [here](#).

STATE NEWS — NEW JERSEY SETTLES WITH 3: New Jersey has reached settlements totaling \$196.5 million with three petroleum companies — Sunoco, BP and Shell — in a decade-long legal battle over pollution caused by the release of methyl tertiary-butyl ether, a fuel additive that contaminated groundwater throughout the state, Attorney General Gurbir Grewal announced Monday. The three petroleum companies have each agreed to pay over \$60 million to resolve liability for environmental damages caused by the additive, Danielle [reports](#). The state's lawsuit was filed in 2007.

MOVER, SHAKER: Diane Regas started Monday as president and CEO of the Trust for Public Land. She most recently was executive director of Environmental Defense Fund.

QUICK HITS

- Oil bust was actually good for a town called "shale city," [Bloomberg](#).
- Trump Jr., donor have longtime undisclosed ties, [Associated Press](#).
- BLM blames missing comments on technology 'breakdown,' [E&E News](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

8:30 a.m. — The Global CCS Institute holds [DC Forum on Carbon, Capture and Storage](#), 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue

8:30 a.m. — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission holds its 30th annual [Regulatory Information Conference](#), North Bethesda, Md.

9:00 a.m. — [Solar Asset Management North America](#) will hold its fifth edition, San Francisco

9:00 a.m. — The Atlantic Council [discussion](#) on "Venezuela's Oil Industry: Can It Survive?"
1030 15th St NW

10:00 a.m. — Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy's 2018 [Energy Innovation Summit](#),
National Harbor

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources hearing on the administration's FY 2019 budget request for Interior, 336 Dirksen

10:15 a.m. — Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on "The Freedom of Information Act: Examining the Administration's Progress on Reforms and Looking Ahead," 226 Dirksen

12:45 p.m. — Resources for the Future seminar on "Impacts of Lower Natural Gas Prices on Employment in the Manufacturing Sector," 1616 P St. NW

1:30 p.m. — U.S. Energy Association presentation on "Can algae really do CC?" 1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW

6:00 p.m. — The Sunlight Foundation discussion on "The State of Environmental Transparency: When Political Interference Obstructs the Public's Right to Know," 1440 G Street NW

6:30 p.m. — John Cardinal Ribat of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, speaks to Congress on climate change, 650 Michigan Ave NE

7:00 p.m. — EnviroRun hosts David Herring, director of communications and education at NOAA's Climate Program Office, 1875 K St NW

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**** A message from Chevron:** With a live 24-hour monitoring system, an infrared Eye in the Sky, and a team stationed around-the-clock, our high-tech Refinery Optimization Center in El Segundo, CA helps us monitor thousands of devices and deliver safer, reliable energy. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2Ge73Qw> **

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/03/special-election-overtakes-coal-country-129280>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Poll: Democrat Lamb leads in Pa. special election [Back](#)

By Elena Schneider and Steven Shepard | 03/12/2018 01:00 PM EDT

PITTSBURGH — Democrat Conor Lamb heads into the final day of the special congressional election in western Pennsylvania with the lead, according to a new public poll released Monday.

Monmouth University used three different turnout models ahead of Tuesday's special election — and Lamb has the advantage in all three of them.

Lamb is squaring off against Republican Rick Saccone, a state legislator and Air Force veteran

in a traditionally blue-collar district that backed President Donald Trump by 20 points in 2016. They're competing to replace GOP Rep. Tim Murphy, who resigned in October.

Lamb leads Saccone, 51 percent to 45 percent, the poll shows — using a turnout model that mirrors a Democratic surge that's appeared in other special elections throughout the last year. Three percent of likely voters are undecided, and 1 percent would support another candidate.

A Monmouth poll released in mid-February, using the same model, found Saccone with a slight edge, 49 percent to 46 percent.

The poll suggests Lamb can win even if that Democratic surge falls short, however. In a more restrictive turnout model — designed to mirror a lower-turnout electorate that typically votes in midterm elections — Lamb has a slim, 2-point lead, 49 percent to 47 percent. A higher-turnout scenario, more similar to a presidential election, produces a 7-point Lamb lead, 51 percent to 44 percent.

"When added to a potential Democratic surge that has been building for weeks, Lamb appears to have picked off enough Republican-leaning voters to take a lead going into this contest's final weekend," said Monmouth University pollster Patrick Murray. "It would mark an extraordinary swing from Trump's nearly 20-point victory here in 2016 if he could hold on to win."

Lamb, a former federal prosecutor, is running as a centrist Democrat. He has called for new leadership in both parties and said he would oppose Nancy Pelosi as leader.

Saccone has frustrated national Republicans with his lackluster fundraising, which has forced outside groups like Congressional Leadership Fund and the National Republican Congressional Committee to dump more than \$10 million into the district.

Republicans used that money to accuse Lamb of being aligned with Pelosi and to attack his tenure as a federal prosecutor.

End Citizens United and VoteVets, both progressive groups, gave Lamb some cover on TV ads, totaling \$600,000.

Despite the barrage of attack ads, Lamb's negatives haven't ticked up significantly over the past few weeks, according to the poll. A majority of likely voters, 53 percent, have a favorable impression of Lamb, compared to 33 percent who view him unfavorably. Last month, Lamb's image rating stood at 49 percent favorable, versus 31 percent unfavorable.

Fewer voters, 47 percent, have a favorable opinion of Saccone, and 43 percent view him unfavorably.

The Monmouth poll was conducted March 8-11 — with most of the interviews coming before Trump's rally last Saturday night in the district. But the poll indicates Trump's backing of Saccone may be a wash for the Republican nominee.

Voters are evenly split on Trump: 49 percent approve his job performance, and the same percentage disapprove. The proportion of likely voters who strongly approve of Trump's job performance (39 percent) and strongly disapprove (41 percent) are also nearly identical.

At Saturday's rally for Saccone, Trump touted his recent decision to impose tariffs on foreign steel and aluminum. But voters in the district aren't convinced: 43 percent think the tariffs will help the local economy, compared to 36 percent who think they will hurt.

And virtually every voter surveyed, 96 percent, said the tariff decision hasn't caused them to change their choice of candidate. Three percent said the tariffs make them more likely to vote for Saccone, while 1 percent said they are more likely to vote for Lamb.

"Voters are divided on the potential impact of tariffs. It doesn't seem that the president's gambit paid off in this race if that was his intent," said Murray. Still, he noted that the poll was taken largely before the rally "and we don't have a clear picture of what impact that might" have.

"A Saccone victory is still well within the poll's margin of error," Murray said, "especially if a Democratic surge does not materialize in the Pittsburgh suburbs."

The poll surveyed 372 likely voters — contacted via a list of voters in the district who have participated in at least one of the last four primary or general elections, plus recent registrants — and has a margin of error of plus or minus 5.1 percentage points.

Steven Shepard contributed to this report from Arlington, Va.

To view online [click here](#).

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Republicans wage 11th-hour blitz in Pa. special election [Back](#)

By Elena Schneider and Alex Isenstadt | 03/12/2018 05:00 AM EDT

MOON TOWNSHIP, Pa. — Republicans mounted a last-ditch stand here to save their struggling candidate for a House seat deep in the heart of Trump country, unleashing the party's full arsenal to stave off a major embarrassment for the president and GOP heading into the midterms.

Nearly every corner of the national party was involved in the final push over the weekend — from the Republican National Committee, which deployed staffers from Washington to knock on doors; to a cash-flush GOP super PAC that orchestrated an under-the-radar effort to diminish Democratic hopeful Conor Lamb's standing with liberal voters; to the powerful Koch political network, which is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a mail and field deployment campaign ahead of Tuesday's closely watched special election.

And then there was President Donald Trump, who flew here on Saturday evening to campaign with Republican nominee Rick Saccone, an appearance the White House hopes will energize GOP voters who've yet to rally behind the underperforming candidate.

The multimillion-dollar undertaking underscored the enormous stakes for the party in the southwestern Pennsylvania district, which Trump won by 20 points but where polls show Lamb and Saccone locked in a tight race. A loss here would be an ominous sign for the party in the run-up to November, starkly illustrating its softening support even in Trump strongholds.

It would also raise questions about whether the themes the GOP has thrust to the forefront of the race — namely its tax cuts and opposition to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi — are as potent as the party had hoped.

By the end of the weekend, Republicans had dropped more than \$8 million on TV ads, outspending Democrats nearly 2 to 1, according to media buying figures. In an indication of just how much capital the administration is expending on the contest, Donald Trump Jr. is slated to campaign with Saccone on Monday, two days after his father staged a rally.

As the contest hurtled into its final days, Lamb, a square-jawed 33-year-old Marine veteran and former federal prosecutor who has appealed to voters in both parties, presented himself as a consummate underdog. Addressing a standing-room-only rally at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Waynesburg on Sunday afternoon, Lamb said the grass-roots support he'd received had allowed him to withstand the advertising barrage from Republican-aligned outside groups.

"They use these same tactics everywhere around the country, but I think when they came to western Pennsylvania, they weren't counting on what they were going to find here," he said.

At a rally with Lamb at the United Steelworkers headquarters in downtown Pittsburgh on Friday, Democratic Rep. Mike Doyle, the dean of the state's congressional delegation, marveled at how much Republicans had spent on the race.

"The president comes in for his second visit, the vice president has been here, Ivanka's been here, Cabinet secretaries have been here, 10 kitchen sinks has been thrown here, \$15 million has been spent here, and that Marine is still standing," Doyle exclaimed.

Yet there's evidence the Republican offensive might be having some effect. A data analysis completed by the RNC during the middle of last week showed Lamb leading just 48 percent to 47 percent, according to two people briefed on the numbers. The Democrat's advantage had shrunk from 4 percentage points in the committee's previous analysis of the race days earlier.

Saccone, a 60-year-old state legislator and retired Air Force officer, was optimistic that momentum was "swinging our way."

"It's a special election, so it's all about turnout," Saccone said at the Allegheny County Republican Party headquarters on Friday, when he was asked why the race was so close. "Our people get out, we win, and there's no problem."

But Saccone vented frustration at the media for their coverage of the race, saying they had given Lamb flattering coverage while largely ignoring Saccone's accomplishments.

"The media fawns over my opponent, trying to stretch his little thin résumé and trying to make it sound like it's something big, when I have a big résumé that they try and scrunch down and don't say anything about," he said.

Senior Republicans have called Saccone a lackluster candidate who has heavily leaned on the national party to run his campaign. Trump himself has been down on Saccone in private; at the rally, the president tried to gin up some excitement for him.

Trump described Saccone as a "really good person," told his supporters to "go out on Tuesday and vote like crazy," and highlighted his decision to impose tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. Party officials hope the tariffs announcement will win over labor workers in the union-heavy district.

At the same time, Republicans are trying to dampen Lamb's support among liberals, whom he needs to show up in big numbers in order to win. Congressional Leadership Fund, a House GOP-aligned outside group, sent mailers to liberal households in the district outlining Lamb's pro-gun credentials and his support for the Second Amendment.

"Thank you Conor Lamb for opposing gun restrictions," say the mailers.

The super PAC has also sent advertisements to Democratic voters saying that Lamb had opposed a \$15 minimum wage and that he "abandoned PA labor unions," who were "outraged" by him.

Lamb was concerned enough about the GOP maneuver that late last week he launched a TV ad to explain his views on guns. The commercial said Lamb "supports strengthening background checks to keep guns from criminals and people in need of mental health treatment."

As they funneled into Trump's rally on Saturday, some of the president's supporters conceded they were worried. They said Lamb had waged a surprisingly energetic campaign for such a conservative district.

"I've seen a lot more Conor Lamb signs in my neighborhood," said Tracy Barzan, a 45-year-old stay-at-home mom whose 13-year-old son, Gavin, wore a Trump hat signed by Mike Pence.

"A lot of people I've heard from who are voting for Conor Lamb are doing so because of his age, him being younger, and looking at it that he has fresh ideas," she added.

A loss on Tuesday would be a painful blow for Republicans, given the pro-Trump tilt of the district and the importance the president has placed on Pennsylvania. The state was a keystone of Trump's 2016 electoral coalition, and he has visited a handful of times since his inauguration.

Before his visit on Saturday, some of the president's loyalists questioned whether Trump should

skip the campaign event, worried that he'd take even more blame if Saccone loses. But others argued the president had little to lose.

"If Rick Saccone somehow loses on Tuesday, regardless of whether the president made the trip on Saturday or not, the media will blame the president," said David Urban, who oversaw Trump's 2016 campaign in the state. "It reminds me of, 'Heads I lose, tails you win.'"

To view online [click here](#).

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Trump pushes support for Saccone a day before election [Back](#)

By Rebecca Morin | 03/12/2018 11:39 AM EDT

President Donald Trump on Monday reinforced his endorsement for Rick Saccone a day before Pennsylvania's special election while at the same time criticizing Saccone's opponent as being allied with Nancy Pelosi.

"The Pittsburgh Post Gazette just endorsed Rick Saccone for Congress. He will be much better for steel and business. Very strong on experience and what our Country needs. Lamb will always vote for Pelosi and Dems....Will raise taxes, weak on Crime and Border," the president tweeted Monday morning.

Saccone has been viewed by [some in his party](#) as a lackluster candidate, and has struggled despite Trump winning the district by nearly 20 points during the 2016 election.

The Post-Gazette's editorial board on Sunday [endorsed](#) Saccone. The endorsement said the state representative "has a wealth of experience and an intimate knowledge of much of the district, because he has represented a part of it in the Legislature."

"He is a good fit for the district and would be an effective representative for it from his first day on the job," according to the endorsement.

Trump also expressed support for Saccone on Saturday during a rally in Pennsylvania. He urged rally attendees to "go out on Tuesday and vote like crazy" and said, "We need Republicans in office."

The president also blasted Lamb at the rally by saying that he is "trying to act like a Republican" but will not side with the GOP once in office.

To view online [click here](#).

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Democrats seek probe into whether Zinke violated Hatch Act [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 03/07/2018 01:24 PM EDT

Two senior House Natural Resources Democrats are [asking](#) the Office of the Special Counsel to investigate whether Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke violated the Hatch Act with an event close to the boundaries of the upcoming special congressional election in Pennsylvania.

State Rep. Rick Saccone, the Republican candidate for the open House seat, attended the Feb. 24 event during which Zinke announced grants to help clean up abandoned mining sites nationwide, including \$56 million in the state. Zinke later appeared on "Fox News" for [an interview](#) during which host Neil Cavuto asked him about the special election.

Ranking member Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Donald McEachin (D-Va.) questioned why the agency selected a site one mile from Pennsylvania's 18th district less than three weeks before the special election, currently considered a toss up. The Hatch Act generally bans government officials from using public resources to promote political campaigns. Grijalva and McEachin say Zinke's appearance in Pennsylvania raises several red flags given its proximity to the election.

"Only a full investigation can clarify whether Secretary Zinke violated the Hatch Act when traveling to the PA-18 boundaries to announce [abandoned mine lands] funding," they wrote. "We urge you to pursue it."

An Interior spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The request for an investigation comes one day after the Office of Special Counsel found White House counselor Kellyanne Conway [violated](#) the statute by advocating for one candidate during Alabama's special Senate race.

To view online [click here](#).

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Interior spent \$139K on Zinke office doors [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 03/08/2018 05:58 PM EDT

The Interior Department is spending \$139,000 for new doors for Secretary Ryan Zinke's office suite, according to [records](#) posted online.

The work was recommended by Interior career facilities and security officials, an agency spokeswoman said, not by Zinke.

"The secretary was not aware of this contract but agrees that this is a lot of money for demo, install, materials, and labor," Heather Swift, the spokeswoman, said in a statement.

The award to Maryland-based Conquest Solutions LLC was first reported by the [Associated Press](#). The work involves replacing three sets of double doors, including two that open onto a balcony and leak during rain storms, the AP reported. An existing set of doors to Zinke's office from a hallway do not have a lock, so the security will be upgraded with the new doors.

Swift said the work is part of a "decade-long modernization of the historic FDR-era building."

"Between regulations that require historic preservation and outdated government procurement rules, the costs for everything from pencils to printing to doors is astronomical. This is a perfect example of why the Secretary believes we need to reform procurement processes."

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson drew criticism recently over news that HUD would spend \$31,000 on a dining set. That order was subsequently canceled.

To view online [click here](#).

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Trump's Interior chief 'hopping around from campaign event to campaign event' [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 10/05/2017 05:01 AM EDT

Republican donors paid up to \$5,000 per couple for a photo with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke at a fundraiser held during a taxpayer-funded trip to the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to documents reviewed by POLITICO — raising questions about his habit of mixing official government business with political activism.

The new details about Zinke's March trip to the Caribbean, including the previously undisclosed invitation to the Virgin Islands Republican Party fundraiser, emerged after weeks of scrutiny of the former Montana GOP congressman's travels. The nearly two-hour event was one of more than a half-dozen times Zinke has met with big donors or political groups while on department-paid trips, Interior travel records and other documents show.

Ethics watchdogs say Zinke is combining politics with his Interior duties so frequently that he risks tripping over the prohibitions against using government resources for partisan activity, even though his appearance at the Virgin Islands event seems to have been legal. Democrats have also seized on the issue, including 26 House members who wrote in a letter Tuesday that Zinke's travels "give the appearance that you are mixing political gatherings and personal destinations with official business."

Zinke has said all his actions have obeyed the law, dismissing concerns about his travel as "a little BS."

But some ethics advocates say Zinke's attendance at a fundraiser during his first month as secretary is not in line with past administrations' conduct, even if he crossed no legal red lines.

"It happens on occasion with other Cabinet secretaries, perhaps even a little more often as you get near the election, but it is not a very common practice for Cabinet members to be hopping around from campaign event to campaign event like we're seeing with Zinke," said Craig Holman, government affairs specialist for government watchdog Public Citizen.

The secretary is already under investigation by his department's inspector general over his use of taxpayer-funded private planes for some of the trips, and the Office of Special Counsel is looking into an activist group's allegations that he violated the Hatch Act, the law limiting political activism by federal employees. The White House has cracked down on Cabinet members' travel habits following former HHS Secretary Tom Price's resignation on Friday, which occurred after POLITICO reported on his own expensive flights.

Zinke visited the Virgin Islands from March 30 to April 1 on an official trip related to the Interior Department's role overseeing the U.S. territory. On his first day, following a "veterans meet and greet" and a reception with Gov. Kenneth Mapp, he appeared in his personal capacity at a March fundraiser for the local Republican Party at the patio bar of the Club Comanche Hotel St. Croix, department records show.

Tickets for the fundraiser ranged from \$75 per person to as much as \$5,000 per couple to be an event "Patron," according to Zinke's official calendar and a copy of the invitation. Patrons and members of the host committee, who paid \$1,500 per couple, could get a photo with Zinke at the start of the event, which was attended by local party members and elected officials.

The following day, Zinke took a \$3,150 flight on a private plane, paid for by the department, from St. Croix to official functions on St. Thomas and returned later that evening. Interior Department officials said there was no other way to accommodate his schedule, which included official events on both islands commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Dutch government transferring control of the islands to the United States.

Zinke is allowed to engage in partisan political activity in a "purely personal (not official) capacity," so long as he does not use government resources, according to Interior Department guidelines on the Hatch Act and other federal laws. The invitation to the GOP fundraiser did not identify Zinke by his official title and included a disclaimer that the money is being solicited by the local party and "not by any federal official."

All told, Zinke has spent around \$20,000 for three charter flights as secretary, nowhere near the \$1 million tab Price racked up on non-commercial trips. But he has on numerous occasions attended political receptions, spoken to influential conservative groups or appeared alongside past campaign donors during trips he has taken outside of Washington, D.C., for official department business.

In one instance, Zinke gave a motivational speech for a professional hockey team owned by a major campaign contributor that he said was official business — and which required him to charter a \$12,000 flight to Montana for an appearance at the Western Governors Association the next day.

In another case, during a speech to the Western Conservative Summit in Denver, he was introduced via a recorded voice as the Interior secretary and Zinke proceeded to talk about the agency's priorities. The summit was organized by the Centennial Institute, which bills itself as Colorado Christian University's think tank and is a part of the State Policy Network of organizations that collectively push for conservative state-level legislation.

An Interior spokeswoman said Zinke always follows the law but declined to answer specific questions about his appearance at the Virgin Islands fundraiser, nor say whether he would keep raising political money. The agency also has yet to post Zinke's trip expenses involving any of the political events.

"The Interior Department under the Trump Administration has always and will always work to ensure all officials follow appropriate rules and regulations when traveling, including seeking commercial options at all times appropriate and feasible, to ensure the efficient use of government resources," spokeswoman Heather Swift said in a statement.

Swift did not respond to questions about whether the department had gotten reimbursement for the political portion of Zinke's three-day Virgin Islands trip, as the head of one watchdog group says it should have.

"Some of this travel is clearly political and that part of the travel should have been paid for by the RNC, NRCC, state political parties, a campaign committee or Zinke personally," said Daniel Stevens, executive director of the Campaign for Accountability.

No payments to the department are listed in the Virgin Islands Republican Party's FEC records.

Zinke is not the first Interior secretary, or Cabinet member, to have his activities questioned.

In 2012, a watchdog group called Cause of Action urged the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether President Barack Obama's then- Interior Secretary Ken Salazar had violated the Hatch Act while taking an Obama reelection campaign RV tour of Colorado with a couple of lawmakers and the state lieutenant governor. Local organizers of one stop on that tour had billed Salazar on its online events calendar as attending the political rally in his official role. OSC would not say whether its investigation uncovered any problems, but travel records Interior has posted show that one of Salazar's aides had told the tour's coordinator the schedule "should not refer to (Salazar as) 'secretary.'" Salazar did not respond to a request for comment.

A former Salazar aide, who was not authorized to speak on the record, said the Obama administration generally tried to avoid scheduling political events that coincided with official travel because it was difficult to divvy up what expenses should be reimbursed by a campaign.

The special counsel's office found Obama HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in violation of the Hatch Act in 2012, saying she had made "extemporaneous partisan remarks" by endorsing a candidate for North Carolina governor during a speech she made in her official capacity. Sebelius tried to scrub the violation by reclassifying the appearance as political and reimbursing the Treasury Department for costs associated with the trip.

Sally Jewell, who was Interior secretary during Obama's second term, said Zinke was within his rights to appear at the fundraiser in the Virgin Islands. Jewell said she once appeared at a fundraiser for Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell while in Obama's Cabinet, though she paid her own way to Washington state and was not identified by her official title.

"If he had legitimate business while he's on the island, to do a political thing on the side, I don't think that is that unusual," Jewell said in an interview.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt canceled his scheduled appearance at a fundraiser for the Oklahoma Republican Party in April because an invitation had identified him by his official title and said he would discuss his work at the agency. EPA ethics officials said he would have been cleared to attend the event if not for that language on the invitation.

Watchdog groups say Zinke's behavior fits a pattern for Trump's Cabinet.

"These government resources have been abused by this administration," said Virginia Canter, an executive branch ethics counsel for Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington who previously worked as an ethics official for Presidents George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush and Obama. "To the extent that some of that supports their political ambitions is inconsistent with the intent of this authority."

The Campaign for Accountability called on Interior's inspector general and the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether Zinke violated the Hatch Act or department ethics rules with his speech to the hockey team, which the group said appeared to be a favor for a donor. Interior's IG office announced its investigation earlier this week, and OSC told the Campaign for Accountability that it was looking into the group's complaint, according to an email shared with POLITICO. The OSC declined to comment.

Reps. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Donald McEachin (D-Va.) have asked Interior's IG to also look into any trips on which the secretary was accompanied by his wife, Lola Zinke, who is chairing the campaign of Montana Republican Troy Downing, a candidate to unseat Democratic Sen. Jon Tester next year. Swift said Lola Zinke was not in the Virgin Islands and has paid her own way whenever she has traveled with her husband on official trips.

Many who know him see Zinke's travels as an attempt to keep in touch with political contacts as he contemplates what he will do after leaving the Trump administration. Back home, the 55-year-old former Montana congressman is seen as an attractive candidate for the open-seat governor's race in 2020, when Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock will have to step down because of term limits.

"I think he's definitely got political aspirations; that's one of the reasons why he is where he is at right now," said Land Tawney, executive director of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, a Montana-based sportsman group that supported Zinke's bid for Interior secretary. "You don't go from being a Montana legislator to a first-term congressman to [Interior] secretary without having ambition."

The Virgin Islands trip was Zinke's first interaction with big donors or influential conservative groups during his travel as Interior secretary.

A weeklong trip in May that took Zinke through Montana, Utah and California also offered a chance to squeeze in some political events.

Zinke delivered the keynote speech at the RNC spring meeting on May 11 in Coronado, Calif. Zinke had flown to California the previous night, after several days touring monuments in Utah, and the RNC speech was his only event in the state aside from a meeting earlier that afternoon with Rep. Amata Radewagen, the Republican delegate from American Samoa, and members of the American Tunaboat Association.

The next day, Zinke flew back to Montana, where he joined Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.) and Vice President Mike Pence to tour a coal mine on the Crow Indian reservation operated by the Westmoreland Coal Co.

The trip offered Zinke and Pence an opportunity to tout the Trump administration's work to promote new coal mining on federal lands — and it allowed them to make a brief detour to promote Zinke's congressional replacement. That Friday night, Zinke, Pence and Daines attended a political rally for GOP candidate Greg Gianforte, and Zinke attended a get-out-the vote event for the Montana GOP the next day.

Zinke apparently paid for his return trip to Washington out of his own pocket — it was marked "personal travel" on his calendar, a designation not applied to the other flights on that trip.

Gianforte, whose wife is a major political donor in Montana, won the May 25 special election to take over Zinke's House seat.

Greg and Susan Gianforte donated more than \$10,000 to Zinke's 2016 congressional campaign and another \$10,000 to a joint Zinke-Daines PAC, according to federal records. The couple donated \$5,000 for his earlier run for Congress.

Zinke met with big influencers and donors in June as well.

On June 25, he flew from D.C. to Reno, Nev., where his only scheduled event was a meeting of the Rule of Law Defense Fund, a group of Republican attorneys general that has been linked to the Koch brothers, where he spoke and took questions for about 30 minutes, according to his schedule.

After his remarks, he sat at a dinner table with Montana's attorney general, the government relations specialist for the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino and Las Vegas Sands, and Koch Industries lobbyist Allen Richardson, Interior documents show.

The next day, Zinke flew to Las Vegas for an event on public lands in nearby Pahrump, Nev., and a speech that night to the National Hockey League's Vegas Golden Knights. Bill Foley, the team owner and chairman of Fidelity, introduced Zinke. Foley donated \$7,800 to Zinke's 2014 campaign, while employees and PACs associated with Fidelity and related companies gave another \$180,000. Interior officials said the speech to the NHL team was part of Zinke's official duties, and they pointed to scheduling conflicts it created to justify his use of a \$12,000 private plane to get to a Western Governors Association meeting in Montana the next day.

In July, Zinke spoke to several conservative groups in Colorado during a three-day trip that also included tours of Interior Department facilities in the state. He flew into Denver on July 20 so he could appear that evening at a closed-door reception for the American Legislative Exchange Council, a group of conservative state legislators, lobbyists and industry groups that has pushed for more state control over federal lands.

And over the next two days, he was a featured speaker at a Republican committee roundtable and attended the Western Conservative Summit in Denver.

Eric Wolff contributed to this report.

To view online [click here](#).

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Lawmakers want more information on alleged corruption at Puerto Rico utility [Back](#)

By Colin Wilhelm | 03/12/2018 05:56 PM EDT

Members of the House Natural Resources Committee, including Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) (R-Utah), are demanding more information from Puerto Rico's power utility as part of a congressional investigation into alleged corruption.

"Billions of taxpayer dollars are pledged to help Puerto Rico, but a lack of faith in Puerto Rico's institutions remains a major barrier to recovery," Bishop and two other Republicans [wrote](#) to the utility's interim executive director.

"A member of the committee has heard from constituents currently working to restore power in Puerto Rico under [agreements with other electric utilities], that utility crews are delayed or unable to complete electrification projects because of a lack of materials" from the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority.

The letter cites an incident in which FEMA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel raided a warehouse storing repair materials that PREPA did not acknowledge existed. Local media in Puerto Rico have also alleged that PREPA officials received bribes from local strip club owners to give them priority in power restoration, and ordered power restored to their own homes before other critical infrastructure, like San Juan's main hospital and airport.

The lawmakers, whose panel has jurisdiction over Puerto Rico and other territories, want more information from PREPA about any open investigations it has into alleged misappropriation of resources or bribery following Hurricane Maria, which struck the commonwealth last fall.

There have been multiple other reports of alleged corruption or mismanagement related to PREPA in the months following Maria's landfall. That includes a now-canceled \$300 million federal-backed contract to a small Montana company that the utility authorized over objections from legal counsel.

PREPA has struggled to fully restore power in Puerto Rico nearly six months after the hurricane hit.

Since then Congress passed several aid packages, including \$2 billion in grants earmarked for repairing and improving Puerto Rico's electrical grid. The commonwealth government has wrestled with the Trump administration over nearly \$5 billion in additional loan funds it says it needs to help shore up the utility, which already struggled with service outages and \$9 billion in debt prior to the storm.

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FEMA commits to long-haul response in U.S. Virgin Islands [Back](#)

By Quint Forgey | 03/12/2018 02:06 PM EDT

A power outage abruptly ended a congressional field hearing today in the U.S. Virgin Islands as local officials complained of slow federal response to last year's hurricanes.

"We're certainly not in the dark on this issue," quipped Rep. [Blake Farenthold](#) (R-Texas), chairman of the House Oversight Subcommittee on Interior, Energy and the Environment.

The ironic electricity lapse highlights the U.S. territory's ongoing woes after Hurricanes Irma and Maria ravaged the islands late last summer, knocking out power to most of the region for several weeks. But a top Federal Emergency Management Agency official said the federal government will fully see the recovery through.

"We will be on the job until the territory tells us we've completed our work," said William

Vogel, who serves as the agency's coordinator for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Vogel said the agency has established 10 disaster recovery centers across the islands and made 92 local hires to better coordinate with area officials.

"The recovery is far from over," said Rep. [Stacey Plaskett](#), the U.S. Virgin Islands' delegate to Congress, noting that the territory's residents will "continue to demand massive amounts of aid."

U.S. Virgin Islands Senate President Myron Jackson complained that the burden of cleaning up mountains of trash fell immediately to residents and the local public works department following the storms, and that coordination between federal and local emergency officials was "very chaotic."

"We really need to revisit how FEMA and the territory protocols are put in place," he said.

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Senate GOP leaders won't try to block Trump's tariffs [Back](#)

By Burgess Everett | 03/12/2018 07:38 PM EDT

Republicans have been freaking out about President Donald Trump's steel and aluminum tariffs all month. But don't expect them to do anything about it just yet.

GOP leaders are shying away from a direct confrontation with Trump over trade, and signaled Monday that they won't try to pass legislation to override a president of their own party. They are instead hoping they can get the president to water down the tariffs as much as they can. Ultimately, they're loath to risk a brutal showdown, even over an issue that's provoked more GOP outrage toward Trump than any other one of his policies or controversies.

So even though several senators are introducing proposals to stop Trump's 25 percent tariff on imported steel and 10 percent tariff on imported aluminum, key Republicans are in no mood for a high-profile fight with Trump.

"That's clearly a long shot. But we're trying as best we can to persuade folks in the administration to scale this back to make it less harmful," said Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the No. 3 GOP senator. "I don't think we can rely on Democrats. And moving something across the floor takes 60. And then you'd have to override a veto."

"It may be more of a back and forth between the executive branch and Congress rather than actual legislation," said Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas). "We're making progress

without legislation."

Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) officially introduced his bill to nullify Trump's tariffs on Monday afternoon and Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) has proposed requiring congressional approval for trade actions. But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has so far expressed no interest in taking Trump on via legislation, according to senators and aides. Asked for a comment, McConnell's office pointed to his earlier remarks expressing reservation about the tariffs.

Flake acknowledged that his leaders do not want to move forward with his bill but insisted that "there are a lot of members who want to vote this way." On Thursday, the Senate GOP spent its party lunch discussing if they have any recourse against Trump; on Sunday Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) said he would support Flake's bill but doubted it could pass.

Facing the steep veto override threshold that would require at least 16 Democrats in support, Republicans are trying an easier road. Many of McConnell's members are hoping Trump simply grants enough exemptions to U.S. allies to make the new metal tariffs palatable, even though a large swath of GOP senators have said Trump's move will kill jobs and amount to a tax increase.

"I'm not a fan of the trade policy but I don't think we're there yet," said Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) of legislation to block Trump. "I think it may work itself out"

"I'm not really happy with what the president's done," said Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). "I'm hoping we can resolve this. And the president's been thinking it over too."

Hatch said last week he hoped Congress might overturn the tariffs. He said that was still on his mind, but added: "But I'm open to almost anything."

Republicans argue they have already made progress with Trump, who has granted exemptions to Canada and Mexico while talks on NAFTA continue. They are hoping he soon goes further and grants similar outs for countries like the United Kingdom and Australia. And while that happens, the Senate is likely to hold hearings on the impact of Trump's policies, Republicans said.

Hill Republicans reason that's far more effective than threatening Trump with legislative action and becoming engulfed in an intraparty war up and down Pennsylvania Avenue while the GOP defends its tenuous congressional majorities. Plus, taking Trump on might just might provoke him further.

"Senate Republicans overwhelmingly oppose these tariffs, but the question is how do we lessen the impact?" said a senior Republican aide. "A bill on the floor that would get a veto would only make things worse with a president who's never shied away from running against Congress."

That's not to say Republicans are happy with where they find themselves, almost unanimously panning Trump's proposals even as they doubt they can do anything about it.

"It would be better if Congress had more of a role," Thune said. "But we gave that away."

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Lightfoot's retirement prompts calls for permanent NASA leader [Back](#)

By Jacqueline Klimas | 03/12/2018 03:58 PM EDT

The acting head of NASA will retire at the end of April, sparking calls on Capitol Hill for the administration to find a permanent head for the nation's space exploration agency.

In a [memo](#) to staff today, Robert Lightfoot promised to work with the White House on a smooth transition to a new administrator and thanked employees for the "unbelievable ride."

He has been the acting head of NASA for all 14 months of Donald Trump's presidency, while the Senate has failed to confirm the administration's permanent choice to lead the agency, Rep. [Jim Bridenstine](#) (R-Okla.).

Bridenstine, who was formally nominated in September, has been unable to win Democratic support because of his past remarks criticizing the LGBT community and denial of climate change.

"The White House needs to nominate a space professional for NASA administrator who will actually garner strong bipartisan support. The current nominee doesn't have the votes," Sen. [Bill Nelson](#) (D-Fla.) said in a statement on Lightfoot's retirement.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sat 2/3/2018 3:08:09 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by the Alliance for American Manufacturing: PHEW: WHAT A WEEK ... BUT: government shuts down next week -- LEIBOVICH on the NFL -- SABAN gives employees 1k bonus -- RNC spends 275k in Pa. special -- B'DAY: Rep. Tom Graves

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by the Alliance for American Manufacturing

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

THE PRESIDENT is at Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach, per Linda Feldmann of the Christian Science Monitor, today's pooler.

HIS MESSAGE, WHILE EN ROUTE ... @realDonaldTrump at 9:40 a.m.: "Rasmussen just announced that my approval rating jumped to 49%, a far better number than I had in winning the Election, and higher than certain 'sacred cows.' Other Trump polls are way up also. So why does the media refuse to write this? Oh well, someday!" ...

... at 9:40 a.m. : "This memo totally vindicates 'Trump' in probe. But the Russian Witch Hunt goes on and on. There was no Collusion and there was no Obstruction (the word now used because, after one year of looking endlessly and finding NOTHING, collusion is dead). This is an American disgrace!"

Happy Saturday. THINGS THAT HAPPENED THIS WEEK: Andrew McCabe left the FBI ... The State of the Union ... A train carrying Republican members of Congress hit a garbage truck and killed a man ... The GOP had their three-day retreat at the Greenbrier in West Virginia, where the president and vice president spoke ... Republicans released the "Nunes Memo" ... The Dow dropped 665.75 points.

-- DON'T FORGET: We are five days from the government running out of money. **AND** Republicans and Democrats are nowhere close to a deal to allow Dreamers to remain in the country. **REMEMBER**, that's why Senate Democrats forced the January shutdown.

A STORY TRUMP ISN'T GOING TO LIKE -- "Stocks Fall to End a Bad Week, and a Boom Begins to Look Shaky," by NYT's Matt Phillips: <http://nyti.ms/2FH4FQy>

-- **OUR COLLEAGUE BEN WHITE** has been cautioning for the past year the risk behind Trump putting so much stock in the stock market.

AND TWO THINGS TRUMP WILL LIKE -- HAIM and CHERYL SABAN email Saban Capital Group employees: "As you may know, at the end of 2017, the Federal Government enacted the most fundamental tax reform since 1986. These reforms are impacting our company in different ways, including a lower tax rate. ... We have been inspired by what Bob Iger has done for Disney employees. As the Hebrew saying goes 'I shall learn from all my teachers' so we decided to follow suit. Eligible employees will receive a one-time after-tax bonus of \$1,000."

-- **"Charter Sets \$15 Minimum Wage,"** by Broadcasting and Cable's John Eggerton: "Citing the tax reform legislation and the FCC's network neutrality reg rollback, Charter CEO Tom Rutledge said Friday that the company was instituting a \$15-per-hour minimum wage across the board by the end of the year." <http://bit.ly/2E1I9Wo>

GET READY FOR SUPER BOWL SUNDAY with MARK LEIBOVICH in NYT MAGAZINE: "Where Does the N.F.L. Go After a Season of Division?: A year of protests, backlash and presidential interference has exposed fault lines between the league's players and its management -- and even between the team owners themselves." <http://nyti.ms/2BRQINt>

-- **LEIBOVICH'S NEW BOOK:** "Big Game: The NFL in a Time of Boom, Doom, and Maximum America" is out Sept. 4. <http://amzn.to/2nFX51o>

THE BIG PICTURE -- TODD PURDUM: "How conservatives learned to hate the FBI": "The aggressive Republican attacks on the FBI are the latest sign -- if one were needed -- that President Donald Trump has upended the longstanding norms of Washington, as he and his allies in Congress seek to undermine the one institution of government that conservatives have typically seen as a bastion of integrity and law-and-order. Since at least the dawn of the New Deal, Republicans have excoriated any number of government entities -- the Tennessee Valley Authority, the State Department, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration -- as woolly-headed, hyper-regulatory and riddled with liberals -- or worse.

"But for decades -- from J. Edgar Hoover's 47-year reign, through the McCarthy era, the civil unrest of the 1960s and right down to the Clinton impeachment -- the FBI and the GOP have almost always been in sympathy, and often in sync. Not even at the height of the Watergate scandal, when the bureau's investigation was imperiling Richard Nixon's presidency, did Republican loyalists mount any serious effort to sow doubt about its work. No more." <http://politi.co/2FI0x2V>

ABOUT THAT MEMO ...

-- **"Justice Dept. told court of source's political influence in request to wiretap ex-**

Trump campaign aide, officials say," by WaPo's Ellen Nakashima: "The court that approved surveillance of a former campaign adviser to President Trump was aware that some of the information underpinning the warrant request was paid for by a political entity, although the application did not specifically name the [DNC] or the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign, according to two U.S. officials familiar with the matter. ... [The] central allegation [of the memo] - that the government failed to disclose a source's political bias - is baseless, the officials said. The Justice Department made 'ample disclosure of relevant, material facts' to the court that revealed 'the research was being paid for by a political entity.'" <http://wapo.st/2BR7tbD>

--"How Trump's Allies Fanned an Ember of Controversy Into Flames of Outrage," by NYT's Mark Mazzetti: "The release of the memo mattered less than #releasethememo. After weeks of buildup, the three-and-a-half-page document about alleged F.B.I. abuses during the 2016 presidential campaign made public on Friday was broadly greeted with criticism, including by some Republicans. They said it cherry-picked information, made false assertions and was overly focused on an obscure, low-level Trump campaign adviser, Carter Page.

"It didn't live up to the hype. But the campaign, captured in the hashtag #releasethememo, which was trending on Twitter for days, may have a far more significant impact than the memo's contents. It was a choreographed effort by House Republicans and top White House officials to push a highly contentious theme -- that the F.B.I. and the Justice Department abused their powers to spy on the Trump campaign, and relied on dodgy information from a former British spy paid by Democratic operatives." <http://nyti.ms/2FCRZKD>

-- @NBCPolitics: "JUST IN: FBI Director Christopher Wray sends message to all bureau employees: 'Talk is cheap; the work you do is what will endure ... Thank you for standing strong together, and for keeping your faith in this institution that means so much to all of us.'" **His full memo** <http://bit.ly/2ECzl6w>

******* A message from the Alliance for American Manufacturing:** Will President Trump keep his promise to America's steelworkers? Steel is our nation's strength. But with steel imports surging and layoffs at steel mills, time is running out. See why the Section 232 steel action matters for American jobs and security. Learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLUXhGWM7x4> *********

THE DEMS: MEMO A NOTHING BURGER -- "Democrats: Nunes memo a dud," by Elana Schor and Kyle Cheney: "Democrats who raged against the release of a GOP memo alleging misconduct at the FBI on Friday tempered their concern with a dash of relief -- and some greeted the document as an outright bust. Drafted to portray the Department of Justice's investigation into Russian election meddling as tainted by bias against President Donald Trump, the memo ultimately bolstered Democrats' defense of the probe by confirming that it did not begin based on the contents of an unverified anti-Trump dossier.

"And the memo offered little new evidence to undercut Special Counsel Robert Mueller's inquiry into Russia's disruption campaign, despite Trump's reported interest in the document as grounds to provoke further public uncertainty about the impartiality of the investigation. 'Republicans have overplayed their hand, and they have created a frenzy about this memo' against the urging of intelligence and law enforcement officials, Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) a member of the House intelligence committee, said in an interview. 'Because the person who is a person of interest here is the president of the United States,' Speier added, 'and in his mind this was going to derail the investigation. It's not going to derail the investigation.'" <http://politi.co/2E0oqST>

-- **HEY GUYS:** You cannot simultaneously argue that releasing the memo would harm national security and say the memo is a nothingburger.

TOP TWEETS -- @jimsciutto: "No changes are going to be made at the DOJ. We fully expect Rosenstein to continue on' - WH Spokesman Raj Shah to @ErinBurnett just now, appearing to walk back Trump's 'You figure that out' comment." ...

@MLevineReports: "Atty Gen Jeff Sessions went off script at human trafficking event this morn to praise Deputy Atty Gen Rod Rosenstein, a reported target of Nunes memo. Noting Rosenstein has 27 yrs at DOJ, Sessions said Rosenstein represents 'the kind of quality & leadership that we want' in DOJ."

JOSH CAMPBELL in the **NYT:** **"Why I Am Leaving the F.B.I.":** "After more than a decade of service, which included investigating terrorism, working to rescue kidnapping victims overseas and being special assistant to the director, I am reluctantly turning in my badge and leaving an organization I love. Why? So I can join the growing chorus of people who believe that the relentless attacks on the bureau undermine not just America's premier law enforcement agency but also the nation's security. My resignation is painful, but the alternative of remaining quiet while the bureau is tarnished for political gain is impossible." <http://nyti.ms/2BRcr8o>

COURT WATCH -- "DOJ seeks dismissal of Manafort civil suit against Mueller ," by Rebecca Morin: "The Department of Justice on Friday evening filed a motion seeking to dismiss a civil suit former top Trump campaign aide Paul Manafort brought against special counsel Robert Mueller. According to the DOJ's motion, Manafort alleged in his civil suit that 'the Acting Attorney General's order directing the Special Counsel to investigate certain matters exceeds the authority provided by the Department of Justice's Special Counsel regulations.' ... Department of Justice civil division lawyers defending Mueller's office and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein said: ... '[T]he Special Counsel is properly operating within the scope of his authority, including with respect to Manafort's ongoing criminal prosecution.'" <http://politi.co/2DWpMmCX>

THE ATLANTIC'S ELAINA PLOTT and MCKAY COPPINS: -- **"Romney Is Already Being Considered for a Republican Leadership Position"** : "Mitt Romney hasn't even officially announced his candidacy for U.S. Senate, yet Republican leadership is already seeing stars. According to a Republican donor with direct knowledge, Senate GOP leaders have expressed an early interest in having Romney succeed Colorado

Senator Cory Gardner as chairman of the [NRSC]. ... A Republican source close to Romney confirmed that the idea of the Utah Republican taking over the NRSC has generated chatter in recent weeks. On Thursday afternoon, Gardner placed a call to a GOP donor, and said that he and Senate leadership 'liked Romney' for the NRSC post." <http://theatlntc/2DWp0kp>

HMM - "Husband of former Trump household aide scores government job," by Andrew Restuccia: "A home improvement contractor married to one of Donald and Melania Trump's former household staffers is now working as an official at the Environmental Protection Agency, the latest example of someone with a personal connection to the Trump family finding work in the administration. New Jersey-based Steve Kopec joined EPA's Region 2 office in New York as a special assistant on Dec. 18, according to a memo obtained by POLITICO. ... According to public records, Kopec previously ran a contracting business from his home in Haskell, New Jersey, called Steve's Tools in Motion. Kopec's wife, Dagmara, previously worked for the Trump family in New York, according to a person familiar with her situation." <http://politi.co/2EfiB7D>

NYT'S DAVID KIRKPATRICK: "Secret Alliance: Israel Carries Out Airstrikes in Egypt, With Cairo's O.K.": "The jihadists in Egypt's Northern Sinai had killed hundreds of soldiers and police officers, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, briefly seized a major town and begun setting up armed checkpoints to claim territory. In late 2015, they brought down a Russian passenger jet.

"Egypt appeared unable to stop them, so Israel, alarmed at the threat just over the border, took action. For more than two years, unmarked Israeli drones, helicopters and jets have carried out a covert air campaign, conducting more than 100 airstrikes inside Egypt, frequently more than once a week - and all with the approval of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

"The remarkable cooperation marks a new stage in the evolution of their singularly fraught relationship. Once enemies in three wars, then antagonists in an uneasy peace, Egypt and Israel are now secret allies in a covert war against a common foe." <http://nyti.ms/2nA8oc3>

REMEMBERING JON HUNTSMAN SR. -- "Utah billionaire philanthropist Jon Huntsman dies at 80," by the Salt Lake Tribune's Matt Canham: "No one could ever accuse Jon Huntsman Sr. of aiming low. Born poor, he sought not to create a business but an international empire. Diagnosed with prostate cancer, he set his sights not only on surviving, but also on creating a research institute to eradicate all cancers. From his gleaming office in the foothills of the Wasatch Mountains, he saw himself not as Utah's wealthiest resident (which he was for many years) but as the state's caretaker, seeking to help the homeless, bolster the state's colleges and ease tensions between Mormons and non-Mormons. Huntsman, a billionaire chemical industrialist and one of the world's most generous philanthropists, died Friday at age 80." <http://bit.ly/2E01cMv>

THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE dropped \$275,678 on get-out-the-vote

efforts on behalf of Rick Saccone, the GOP candidate running in a special House election in Pennsylvania.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump speaks while participating in a Customs and Border Protection roundtable discussion after touring the CBP National Targeting Center on Feb. 2 in Sterling, Virginia. | Andrew Harrer-Pool/Getty Images

SEXUAL HARASSMENT FILES -- "Humane Society CEO resigns after sexual harassment allegations," by WaPo's Danielle Paquette: "Humane Society of the United States chief executive Wayne Pacelle resigned Friday amid sexual harassment complaints and a backlash by major donors. The announcement of Pacelle's departure comes one day after the charity's board voted to retain the chief executive, and two hours after the board chairman dismissed the allegations against him as lacking 'credible evidence.' The board named Kitty Block, an attorney who is president of Humane Society's international affiliate, as acting chief executive. 'The last few days have been very hard for our entire family of staff and supporters,' board chairman Rick Bernthal said in a statement. 'We are profoundly grateful for Wayne's unparalleled level of accomplishments and service to the cause of animal protection and welfare.'" <http://wapo.st/2DWobYR>

BUSINESS BURST -- "Fed Limits Wells Fargo Growth, Replaces Directors, Citing 'Abuses,'" by WSJ's Ryan Tracy and Emily Glazer: "Wells Fargo will replace four board members and face limits on growing its banking business after an unprecedented action announced Friday by the U.S. Federal Reserve, which cited 'widespread consumer abuses.' The harsh rebuke of the third-largest U.S. bank by assets came on the last business day of Janet Yellen's tenure as chairwoman of the Fed. It prompted Wells Fargo's stock to fall more than 6% in after-hours trading on Friday. ... The Fed has never before imposed such a broad, companywide growth restriction as part of an enforcement action, Fed officials said. Wells Fargo is barred from growing past the \$1.95 trillion in assets it had at the end of 2017. Fed officials did say the company can continue to lend and take deposits." <http://on.wsj.com/2FGJ2jy> ... **Yellen farewell interview with PBS Newshour last night** <http://to.pbs.org/2FIY2qJ>

--"Payday Rules Relax on Trump's Watch After Lobbying by Lenders," by NYT's Alan Rappeport: "In mid-April, hundreds of members of the payday lending industry will head to Florida for their annual retreat featuring golf and networking at a plush resort just outside Miami. The resort just happens to be the Trump National Doral Golf Club. It will cap a year in which the industry has gone from villain to victor, the result of a concentrated lobbying campaign that has culminated in the Trump administration's loosening regulatory grip on payday lenders and a far friendlier approach by the industry's nemesis, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau." <http://nyti.ms/2DZDwla>

BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- "States Look at Establishing Their Own Health Insurance Mandates," by WSJ's Stephanie Armour: "At least nine states are considering their own versions of a requirement that residents must have health insurance, a move that could accelerate a divide between Democratic states trying to shore up the Affordable Care Act and Republican states intent on tearing it down.

"Congressional Republicans in December repealed the so-called individual mandate, a pillar of the ACA, as part of their tax overhaul. That cheered conservatives who say people shouldn't be forced to buy insurance, but it has now energized liberals who say a mandate is needed to ensure coverage and keep premiums low. Maryland lawmakers are pursuing a plan to replace the ACA mandate, which requires most people to pay a penalty if they don't have coverage. California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Minnesota, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington, as well as the District of Columbia, are publicly considering similar ideas." <http://on.wsj.com/2nHrVqa>

WHITE HOUSE DEPARTURE LOUNGE - "National Security Council official behind 5G memo leaves White House," by WaPo's Josh Rogin: "The author of a memo arguing for a government takeover of development of the nation's 5G mobile network has been removed from the National Security Council staff. The memo's unauthorized release this week caused uproar in the telecom community and created embarrassment for the White House A senior administration official confirmed to me that Air Force Brig. Gen. Robert Spalding is no longer serving as NSC senior director for strategic planning." <http://wapo.st/2FGM1sn>

***** **A message from the Alliance for American Manufacturing:** President Trump promised swift action to stand up for steel jobs and safeguard national security when he launched a "Section 232" investigation into steel imports last April. But the president has yet to make good on that pledge. Meanwhile, steel imports surged 15.5 percent in 2017. Several steel mills closed and laid off workers. Tens of thousands of jobs across America continue to be at risk - along with America's ability to equip our military and build critical infrastructure. Even in this digital age, steel undergirds our military power, not to mention critical infrastructure. See why the Section 232 steel action matters for American jobs and security. Learn more:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLUXhGWM7x4> *****

CLICKER - "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker -- **15 keepers** <http://politi.co/2E9Rsmh>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

-- **"Women Once Ruled the Computer World. When Did Silicon Valley Become Brotopia?"** by Emily Chang in Bloomberg in an excerpt of "Brotopia: Breaking Up the Boys' Club of Silicon Valley": "How the tech industry sabotaged itself and its own pipeline of talent." <https://bloom.bg/2DZd2H2> ... **\$25.20 on Amazon**
<http://amzn.to/2m1OJkM>

-- **"The Trippy, High-Speed World of Drone Racing,"** by Ian Frazier in The New Yorker: "There is no slacker component to the new generation of talented young pilots who like to fool around with quadcopters." <http://bit.ly/2E9U6bH>

-- **"The Mutilated and the Disappeared,"** by Alice Driver in Longreads: "A visit to the only shelter in Mexico for migrants who have been mutilated along the migrant trail." <http://bit.ly/2EAyYci>

-- **"The Predatory Genius,"** by Terry Teachout in Commentary Magazine - per ALDaily.com's description: "He was the greatest choreographer of the 20th century. But his treatment of female dancers looks a lot like sexual predation. What will become of George Balanchine's reputation?" <http://bit.ly/2BQssv4>

-- **"The Indomitable [Hilary Geary] Ross: Palm Beach's Hilary Geary Ross Takes on Washington,"** by Michele Meyer on the cover of January's Palm Beach Illustrated: "I placed masks with Wilbur's face on sticks at each place setting and requested guests wear them. That was quite a visual. Imagine, 350 Wilburs! Grander gestures include transforming their Palm Beach ballroom into Club R, where an aerialist poured Champagne into guests' glasses while swinging upside down from a trapeze." <http://bit.ly/2rNntvx> ... **The cover** <http://politi.co/2EkhsJv>

-- **"The Woman Behind the Lens: Meet White House Photographer Shealah Craighead,"** by Rachel Epstein in Marie Claire: "One year into Donald Trump's presidency, his photographer reflects on her journey to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue -- and what she hopes to capture now that she's there." <http://bit.ly/2EccKzS>

-- **"Forensic Science Put Jimmy Genrich in Prison for 24 Years. What if It Wasn't Science?"** by Meehan Crist and Tim Requarth on the cover of The Nation: "A special investigation reveals a disastrous flaw affecting thousands of criminal convictions." <http://bit.ly/2FHgAy6> ... **The cover** <http://politi.co/2DYsLWv>

-- **"Who buys a child for sex? Otherwise ordinary men,"** by Tim Swarens in the Indy Star: "Buyers who fuel the child sex trade are seldom held accountable. Most leave behind their victims to blend back into their families and neighborhoods." <http://indy.st/2DVrVdm>

-- **"Dirty Gold, Clean Cash" -** The Miami Herald: "A river of gold controlled by drug lords runs through Miami." <http://hrlld.us/2EahVA8>

-- **"What Does It Mean to Die?"** by Rachel Aviv in The New Yorker: "When Jahi McMath was declared brain-dead by the hospital, her family disagreed. Her case challenges the very nature of existence." <http://bit.ly/2EyzEiq>

-- **"What It's Like to Be Rolodexed: One Candidate's Journey into the Reality of Political Fundraising,"** by Paul Perry in the Intercept: "As the campaign dragged on

and their sense of the weakness of the field and my campaign gathering strength, my finance director started getting more calls from [the DCCC] finance people. They wanted weekly numbers, down to the number of hours I had spent on the phone with donors each week, how much money I had raised on a weekly and daily basis, and even average contribution estimates." <http://bit.ly/2DZEtiC>

-- **"When and Why Nationalism Beats Globalism,"** by Jonathan Haidt in the American Interest in July 2016: "And how moral psychology can help explain and reduce tensions between the two." <http://bit.ly/2nCTPng>

-- **"Standoff,"** by the Dallas Morning News' Jamie Thompson: "How the Dallas SWAT team cornered and killed the July 7 police shooter." <http://bit.ly/2GlyCkv>

-- **"The Astronaut Who Might Actually Get Us to Mars,"** by Katy Vine in Texas Monthly's February issue: "The improbable journey of Franklin Chang Díaz, who immigrated to the U.S. at eighteen, became an astronaut, tied the record for most spaceflights, and now might hold the key to deep space travel." <http://bit.ly/2EyzMhU>

-- **"A Kingdom from Dust,"** by Mark Arax in California Sunday: "Stewart Resnick is the biggest farmer in the United States, a fact he has tried to keep hidden while he has shaped what we eat, transformed California's landscape, and ruled entire towns. But the one thing he can't control is what he's most dependent on - water." <http://bit.ly/2DW9BV0> (h/t Longform.org)

Playbookers

SPOTTED: former Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) in the last row of first class on Alaska Airlines flight 5 from DCA to LAX this morning - *pic* <http://bit.ly/2FGaBcO>

SPOTTED at Matt McDonald's 40th birthday party last night at the Metropolitan Club: Kevin Madden, Dan Ronayne, Tom Kise, Danny Diaz, Brian Jones, Patrick Bruchette, Joe Kildea, Adam Temple

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Amanda Kitchen, RGA fundraiser (hubby tip: fiancé Devin O'Malley)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Fred Hochberg, former chairman of the Export-Import Bank and now a resident fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics. **How he got his start in politics:** "I ran for school treasurer in high school. My campaign slogan: 'Fred gets the bread!' I won and was hooked." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2nEUJ2P>

BIRTHDAYS: Matt Rhoades, founder of Definers Public Affairs, is 43 (hat tips: Tim Griffin and Andy Hemming) ... Arthur Levitt, the longest-serving SEC chairman, is 87 ... Jose Antonio Vargas, founder/CEO of Define American, is 37 ... Seth Lavin ... Virginia

Boney ... Douglas Holtz-Eakin, president of the American Action Forum, is 6-0 (h/t Anne Schroeder) ... former Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.) is 85 ... Kathryn Lyons, managing editor at FamousDC (h/t Amos Snead) ... Amy Chapman ... Mark Webster ... Billy Shore, executive chairman of No Kid Hungry and Share Our Strength, is 62 ... Anne Muscarella, director of comms at OZY ... Marianna Delafield ... former Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley is 75 ... Adriana Brizuela is 3-0 ... Amy Chapman ... John Hendren ... Mike Ryan ... SKDK's Justine Turner ... Romen Borsellino ... Kyle Tharp of NGP VAN ... James Holm, executive producer of MSNBC's "AM Joy," is 46 ... MaryAlice Parks, deputy political director at ABC News (h/ts Chris Kimmel and Arlette Saenz) ... Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.) is 59 ... Rep. Tom Graves (R-Ga.) is 48 ... Janet Kanzawa ... RALLY principal Latia Curry ... Lys Mendez, chief comms officer at Liberty Hill Foundation ...

... **Josh Lipsky**, speechwriter and adviser to IMF managing director Christine Lagarde, is 32 (h/t Herbie Ziskend) ... Dave Arnold, Tesla's global communications director (h/ts Juleanna Glover and Kam Mumtaz) ... Fox News contributor Lisa Marie Boothe ... Rebecca Mark of Cruise Automation ... Sean McCormick ... Dana Thomas, contributing editor for T: The New York Times Style magazine and author of "Gods and Kings and Deluxe: How Luxury Lost Its Luster" (h/t Ben Chang) ... Neal Carruth, GM of podcasting at NPR, is 41 ... Lisa Francis ... Edelman's Steve Weiss ... Jonathan Lachman, COO of Leap Motion ... Tara Kutz ... Chris DeRose ... Al Shofe ... Lawrence Kluttz ... Dennis Cariello ... Alex Boian ... Katina Niarchos ... Ruth Axton ... Diana Hartstein Beinart ... Marianne Delafield ... Kim Sneed ... Al Shofe ... Zaida Hill Ricker ... Clay Hollis ... Jessica Ann Levandowski ... Morgan Fairchild is 68 (h/t AP)

THE SHOWS, by @MattMackowiak, filing from Austin:

--**ABC's "This Week"**: Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) ... Rep. Will Hurd (R-Texas). Panel: Mary Bruce, Bill Kristol, Roland Martin, Jen Psaki and Anthony Scaramucci

--**CBS's "Face the Nation"**: Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) ... Leon Panetta. National Security panel: Michael Morrell, Victoria Nuland and Fran Townsend ... National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases director Dr. Anthony Fauci. Political panel: Molly Ball, Slate and Jamelle Bouie, Ben Domenech and Julie Pace ... author Steve Coll

--**"Fox News Sunday"**: Leon Panetta ... Rep. Chris Stewart (R-Utah) and Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.). Panel: Howard Kurtz, Jonathan Swan, Gillian Turner and Mo Elleithee. "Power Player of the Week" with U.S. Army Center of Military History executive director Charles R. Bowery

--**NBC's "Meet the Press"**: Reince Priebus ... John Brennan ... Bryant Gumbel. Panel: Yamiche Alcindor, Hugh Hewitt, Eugene Robinson and Amy Walter

--**CNN's "State of the Union"**: Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) ... Rep. Jim Himes (D-Conn.) and Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-Ohio). Panel: Jennifer Granholm, Mike Rogers, Rick Santorum and Rep. Karen Bass (R-Calif.)

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** with John King: Panel: Julie Pace, Michael Bender, Nia-Malika Henderson and Manu Raju

--**CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"**: Jordan's King Abdullah II

--**CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: Chris Ruddy. Panel: David Zurawik, Hadas Gold and Michael Isikoff ... Julia Ioffe ... Julian Zelizer ... Margaret Sullivan

--**Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) ... Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.) ... James Kallstrom. Panel: Mary Kissel and Lee Carter

--**Fox News' "MediaBuzz"**: Sean Spicer ... Rachael Bade ... Mollie Hemingway ... Jessica Tarlov ... Cathy Areu ... Gayle Trotter

--**Univision's "Al Punto"**: Carlos Diaz-Rosillo ... wife of deportee (Jorge Garcia) Cindy Garcia ... author and journalist Laura Wildes-Muñoz and immigration activists and DREAMers Alex Aldana and Melody Klingenfuss ... actress Rita Moreno ... ousted FEPADE (Mexican) prosecutor Santiago Nieto ... Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernández

--**C-SPAN: "The Communicators"**: Omtron Automation engineering manager for the Americas' Mike Chen ... DJI strategic partnership director Michael Perry ... Kickstarter west coast design & tech outreach lead Clarissa Redwine ... Robolink CEO Hansol Hong ... Robolink coding instructor Arnold Suarez ... **"Newsmakers"**: Americans for Prosperity president Tim Phillips, questioned by Politico's Maggie Severns and Bloomberg News' Bill Allison ... **"Q&A"**: Author and baseball statistician Bill James

--**MSNBC's "Kasie DC"**: Rep. Chris Collins (R-N.Y.) ... Rep. Steve Stivers (R-Ohio) ... Rep. Denny Heck (D-Wash.) ... Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.) ... Rep. Roger Marshall (R-Kan.) ... Reuters' Jeff Mason ... John McLaughlin ... Erica Werner ... Mike Memoli ... Dave Wasserman ... congressional candidate Lauren Baer ... Dana Milbank ... Seung Min Kim

--**Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at <http://bit.ly/2mGabdq>): CBS News correspondent Bianna Golodryga.

***** **A message from the Alliance for American Manufacturing**: Steel is America's strength, but the industry faces a wave of imports from countries like Korea, China, Russia, Turkey, and Brazil. These steel imports threaten tens of thousands of jobs and our national security. Only one American company now makes the type of steel needed for the electric grid, and only one supplies the steel used to make Virginia-class submarines. President Trump repeatedly has promised to stand up for American-made steel - and it's time for him to keep that promise. See why the Section 232 steel action matters for American jobs and security. Learn more:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLUXhGWM7x4> *****

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From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 9/20/2017 10:32:34 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by UC Davis: TOM PRICE's pricey jet habit -- WHERE THINGS STAND ON GRAHAM-CASSIDY -- SCHUMER, Corker, Warner break bread in Penn Quarter -- TRUMP huddling with Jordanian king, P.A. president -- B'DAY: Ainsley Earhardt

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by UC Davis

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Driving the Day

SCOOP -- DAN DIAMOND and RACHANA PRADHAN: "Price's private-jet travel breaks precedent": "In a sharp departure from his predecessors, Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price last week took private jets on five separate flights for official business, at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars more than commercial travel. The secretary's five flights, which were scheduled between Sept. 13 and Sept. 15, took him to a resort in Maine where he participated in a Q&A discussion with a health care industry CEO, and to community health centers in New Hampshire and Pennsylvania, according to internal HHS documents.

"The travel by corporate-style jet comes at a time when other members of the Trump administration are under fire for travel expenditures, and breaks with the practices of Obama-era Secretaries Sylvia Mathews Burwell and Kathleen Sebelius, who flew commercially while in the continental United States. ... Current and former staffers, speaking on the condition of anonymity, say Price has been taking private jets to travel domestically for months. Ethics experts say the use of private charters by government officials, while legal, is highly dubious and in most cases a misuse of taxpayer funding." <http://politi.co/2wGaxEW>

-- ARIZONA REPUBLIC: "President Trump's August rally cost Phoenix taxpayers more than \$450,000" <http://bit.ly/2xvdDj5>

Good Wednesday morning. ROSH HASHANAH begins at 6:50 p.m. tonight. Happy New Year to those who are celebrating.

PREPARE FOR SILENCE -- THE SENATE left town Tuesday afternoon for the week with a definite sense that **GRAHAM-CASSIDY** health-care bill had a serious chance of

becoming law. **DON'T MISTAKE SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MITCH MCCONNELL's** silence for indifference or uncertainty. If he has the votes, he'll bring this up and send it to the House.

-- **DEPT. OF NOTHING NEW HERE: THE CRITICAL VOTES:** Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) and John McCain (R-Ariz.).

-- **COULD MURKOWSKI VOTE YES?** Consider this tweet, from Kasie Hunt (@kasie): "Sen. Murkowski kicked the door open; she told @LACaldwellDC she could have a convo with Alaskans about it if certain conditions met." On the other hand, her governor signed a bill with nine other governors asking the Senate not to consider the bill. She has a way out, if she wants one. **The letter** <http://bit.ly/2hhgemY>

-- **HOW ABOUT MCCAIN?** He has said he's mulling over his friend Lindsey Graham's bill, and as we hung around the Senate yesterday, it seemed like most of his stated objections were procedural -- i.e. there aren't enough hearings, there isn't enough time.

TAKE NOTE: Neither McCain nor Murkowski has said that they will not vote for this bill yet. If it comes to the floor, it will be next week. **REPUBLICANS** are still short of 50 votes, and McConnell world has made clear it isn't interested in seeing another vote go up in flames on the Senate floor.

SEUNG MIN KIM and BURGESS EVERETT: "Republicans rip Rand for rejecting Obamacare repeal": <http://politi.co/2f9uhKD>

WHAT THE OPPOSITION IS THINKING -- "Senate Democrats ponder tying up repeal debate for days," by Jen Haberkorn: "Senate Democrats are weighing whether they have enough procedural tricks - and stamina - to kill a possible GOP attempt to repeal Obamacare. The Democrats are considering whether they could force enough amendment votes on the Senate floor to run out the clock and effectively kill the Obamacare repeal, by taking debate past Sept. 30, when the GOP's special procedural tool to pass a bill with just a simple majority expires. ...

"If Republicans move forward ... they would be faced with an extremely tight timeline. They left Washington on Tuesday ahead of Rosh Hashanah and are not expected to return until Monday evening. Yom Kippur will begin Friday evening, just about 30 hours before the reconciliation deadline hits on Saturday, Sept. 30. Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), one of the authors of the latest Obamacare repeal bill, who attends a Baptist church, said he won't try to get the Senate to work through the Jewish holiday." <http://politi.co/2fjseHI>

ADAM CANCRYN takes stock of the **OUTSIDE OPPOSITION:** "Republicans hoping to jam a last-minute Obamacare repeal plan through the Senate are confronting a rising tide of opposition as health care groups, patient advocates and even some red-state governors join forces against a bill they worry would upend the nation's health care system. The wide-ranging backlash threw the GOP's repeal push into fresh doubt on

Tuesday, even as White House officials and Senate Republican leaders insist they are on the verge of winning the 50 votes needed to dismantle Obamacare under a reconciliation bill that expires in two weeks.

"Opponents of the proposal co-authored by Sens. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina seized on its plan to overhaul Obamacare's subsidized insurance and Medicaid expansion and replace those with block grants to the states -- a mass restructuring they warned would sow chaos in insurance markets. They panned its new regulatory flexibilities as a backdoor route to undermining key patient protections - including safeguards for those with pre-existing conditions. And in the biggest blow, several Republican governors urged the GOP to abandon a plan that would force states to swallow potentially billions in funding cuts - and instead to focus on stabilizing Obamacare." <http://politi.co/2xd3VSY>

IF IT PASSES ... -- "House GOP under pressure if Senate passes repeal," by Rachael Bade and Kyle Cheney: "House Republicans had a single vote to spare when they passed a bill gutting Obamacare earlier this year. If they get another crack at it, expect it to be just as suspenseful. Though House GOP leaders are bullish that they can pull off a repeat performance on Obamacare repeal if given the chance, they'll have to twist a lot of arms within the ranks to get there. Some conservatives want more flexibility for governors. At the same time, vulnerable centrists from states that would be hit hardest by the Senate bill, including California and New York, could face a severe backlash from constituents." <http://politi.co/2hhl2b8>

-- JIMMY KIMMEL: CASSIDY "lied right to my face" <http://bit.ly/2xITVFT>

WHAT WAS ON PRESIDENT TRUMP'S MIND -- @realDonaldTrump at 10:41 p.m.: "I was saddened to see how bad the ratings were on the Emmys last night - the worst ever. Smartest people of them all are the 'DEPLORABLES.'"

NEXT UP, via Brian Faler, Ben White and Josh Dawsey: "Senior White House and congressional officials are thinking about ways to make tax reform less generous to the wealthy and are considering a smaller corporate tax cut, people familiar with the negotiations said Tuesday.

"Removing some benefits for the rich and backing off a proposed 15 percent corporate tax rate would help Republicans in two ways: by broadening the political appeal of tax reform and reducing its cost." <http://politi.co/2hhlDuh>

-- WAPO 's Damian Paletta and Mike DeBonis: "White House negotiators are also considering giving up on a push to repeal the estate tax, which is levied on individuals who die with more than \$5.49 million in their estates. Republicans have long called for repealing the tax, but Democrats have raised objections, saying repeal would benefit only the wealthy and would add to the federal debt." <http://wapo.st/2wFJZUn>

REMINDER: Both chambers have to pass a budget in order to pass tax reform with a

simple majority.

AP/MEXICO CITY: "Mexicans dig through collapsed buildings as quake kills 217":

"Police, firefighters and ordinary Mexicans dug frantically through the rubble of collapsed schools, homes and apartment buildings early Wednesday, looking for survivors of Mexico's deadliest earthquake in decades as the number of confirmed fatalities stood at 217." <http://bit.ly/2figu8j>

-- **@BarackObama:** "Thinking about our neighbors in Mexico and all our Mexican-American friends tonight. Cuidense mucho y un fuerte abrazo para todos." ...

@realDonaldTrump: "God bless the people of Mexico City. We are with you and will be there for you."

***** **A message from UC Davis:** At UC Davis, unusual collaborations in veterinary medicine, human health and engineering lead to groundbreaking treatments for beloved pets and other animals, from furry to feathered. Those breakthroughs lead to translatable human medicine. It's a One Health approach that benefits the health of all. Learn more at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

THE LATEST ON THE HURRICANES -- "Hurricane Maria aims at Puerto Rico after slamming Dominica," by AP's Danica Coto in San Juan, Puerto Rico: "Puerto Rico

faced Wednesday what officials said could be the strongest hurricane to ever hit the U.S. territory as they warned it would decimate the power company's crumbling infrastructure and force the government to rebuild dozens of communities. Maria barreled toward the island with 175 mph winds and was expected to make landfall Wednesday midmorning along Puerto Rico's southeast coast as a Category 5 storm, punishing the island with life-threatening winds for 12 to 24 hours, forecasters said."

<http://bit.ly/2xdelMK>

ON TRUMP'S U.N. SPEECH -- NYT: "Heralding 'America First' In Combative U.N. Speech, Trump Airs List of Threats ... NEWS ANALYSIS: Reshaping U.S. Role With One Word ... Pledging to 'Destroy' North Korea if Provoked" <http://nyti.ms/2hf97PA> ...

WAPO: "Trump makes defiant U.N. debut ... ANALYSIS: Robust emphasis on sovereignty echoes president's domestic agenda ... HE DEFENDS 'AMERICA FIRST' OUTLOOK ... Threatens to destroy N. Korea, reconsider Iran deal" ... **WSJ:** Trump Takes Aim at North Korea".

-- **TRUMP'S WEDNESDAY: TRUMP** is still in New York, where he'll meet with the king of Jordan and the president of the Palestinian Authority. He'll have a working lunch with African leaders before meeting with U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May. Trump also meets with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

MUELLER UPDATE -- "Special Counsel's Office Interviewed Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein," by WSJ's Aruna Viswanatha and Del Quentin Wilber:

"Special Counsel Robert Mueller's office has interviewed Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein about President Donald Trump's firing of former FBI Director James Comey,

according to people familiar with the investigation. The interview, which occurred in June or July, presents the unusual situation of investigators questioning the person directly overseeing their probe. Mr. Mueller's office is investigating Russia's alleged meddling in the 2016 election, whether any associates of Mr. Trump coordinated with Moscow's efforts, and related matters." <http://on.wsj.com/2ydgTNe>

-- **"Mueller team's focus on Manafort spans 11 years,"** by CNN's Evan Perez and Shimon Prokupecz: "Special Counsel Robert Mueller's team is reaching back more than a decade in its investigation of Paul Manafort, a sign of the pressure Mueller is placing on President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman. The FBI's warrant for a July search of Manafort's Alexandria, Virginia, home said the investigation centered on possible crimes committed as far back as January 2006, according to a source briefed on the investigation. The broad time frame is the latest indication that Mueller's team is going well beyond Russian meddling during the campaign." <http://cnn.it/2xfWacf>

-- **SHOT: "Trump using campaign, RNC funds to pay legal bills from Russia probe: sources,"** by Reuters' Karen Freifeld and Ginger Gibson: "President Donald Trump is using money donated to his re-election campaign and the [RNC] to pay for his lawyers in the probe of alleged Russian interference in the U.S. election, two people familiar with the matter told Reuters. Following Reuters exclusive report on Tuesday, CNN reported that the [RNC] paid in August more than \$230,000 to cover some of Trump's legal fees related to the probe.

"RNC spokesperson Cassie Smedile confirmed to Reuters that Trump's lead lawyer, John Dowd, received \$100,000 from the RNC and that the RNC also paid \$131,250 to the Constitutional Litigation and Advocacy Group, the law firm where Jay Sekulow, another of Trump's lawyers, is a partner. The RNC is scheduled to disclose its August spending on Wednesday. The Trump campaign is due for a disclosure on Oct. 15. The U.S. Federal Election Commission allows the use of private campaign funds to pay legal bills arising from being a candidate or elected official." <http://reut.rs/2wxem3Y>

-- **CHASER: "For Trump Aides Caught in Russia Probe, Legal Bills and Paranoia,"** by Bloomberg's Shannon Pettypiece: "Four months as a communications adviser to Donald Trump's campaign have turned Michael Caputo's life upside down. Since congressional investigators decided they wanted to interview Caputo as part of an investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 election, he's drained his children's college fund to pay more than \$30,000 in legal fees, he said. He bought guns for his home and office after receiving death threats. He worries about the stress on his wife and daughters. ... [O]utside the spotlight, a large cast of peripheral characters are finding themselves drawn into the probe, incurring legal fees that can run up to \$1,000 an hour and infecting the West Wing and Trump's orbit with a deep paranoia." <https://bloom.bg/2jCFCG2>

GOOD NEWS FOR TRUMP -- NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL: "Trump rebounds after polling slide," by Steven Shepard: "President Donald Trump's summer swoon appears to be over. After months of declining poll numbers, the president's

approval ratings have stabilized - and even ticked up slightly - over the past month.

"Following a low of 39 percent in the POLITICO/Morning Consult poll last month after his controversial reaction to the violent protests in Charlottesville, Virginia, Trump is back at 43 percent in this week's survey. Other surveys show similar results: Trump bottomed out at 35 percent in Gallup's weekly tracking poll in late August, but ticked up to 38 percent last week. Trump is at 40 percent in the RealClearPolitics average, up about 2.5 points from his low-water mark last month." <http://politi.co/2xhqL9p>

-- **"Poll: Plurality supports single-payer health care,"** by Steven Shepard:
<http://politi.co/2fiw188>

-- **CHECK IT OUT:** POLITICO has a new landing page for polling data
<http://politi.co/2ypx18v>

THE JUICE ...

-- **BILL HYERS'** team is out with another campaign ad introducing Andy Kim, challenger to Rep. Tom MacArthur (R-N.J.). **The ad** <http://bit.ly/2yd67X5> MacArthur was deeply involved in the House's effort to repeal and replace Obamacare -- and Kim is trying to use that against him. MacArthur's district -- an east-to-west slice of southern New Jersey -- is only slightly Republican. MacArthur had \$377,769 on hand at the end of June. Kim had \$115,202 on hand.

-- **@IsaacDovere:** "Currently, @SenSchumer, @SenBobCorker and @MarkWarner are having a very relaxed, jackets off dinner at 701 in Penn Quarter".

-- **TV TODAY: JOHN KERRY** is joining "Morning Joe" live on-set at around 7:30 a.m. to talk about Trump's UN address, Iran, North Korea and the Paris climate accord.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Senate Armed Services committee chairman Sen. John McCain comforts Victor Sibayan, of Chula Vista, Calif., whose son, Navy FC1 Carlos Sibayan, 23, died in the USS Fitzgerald collision, after a hearing on recent Navy incidents at the Capitol on Sept. 19. | Jacquelyn Martin/AP Photo

STORY OF THE DAY -- MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER -- "Bentley notes reveal thinking of governor, candidates in U.S. Senate appointment," by Brian Lyman: "The notes, recently released to the Alabama Department of Archives and History, shine some light on an opaque process that led to Strange's appointment. Besides [former Gov. Robert] Bentley's notes, the documents include legal memos from Bentley's staff and submissions from the candidates interviewed. ... Former Revenue Commissioner

Julie Magee submitted a list of reasons to appoint her and suggested in her submission that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., asked Bentley to appoint a woman to the U.S. Senate. Magee said the administration should 'just own it.'"

<http://on.mgmadv.com/2xh0Z57> ... **The notes** <http://bit.ly/2xOYDxq>

DEM REBUILDING PROJECT -- "Democrats Mount Effort to Recruit Women as State Attorneys General," by NYT's Jonathan Martin in Nashville: "Hillary Clinton's defeat last year ignited an intense debate about the role of gender in American politics, but the presidential race overshadowed a deeper structural challenge for Democrats: They have a scarcity of female officeholders in state capitals. Only two governors and five state attorneys general are Democratic women, an acute problem for a party that counts women as a pillar of its base and trumpets the value of diverse representation.

"Moving to address the disparity, the Democratic Attorneys General Association gathered here last week and created a committee of current and former attorneys general and other partners to recruit, train and raise money for female candidates. The project is called the 1881 Initiative, named for the first year that a woman sought, unsuccessfully, the office of state attorney general. (Two did, in California and Illinois.) The goal is to ensure that in five years, at least half of the party's attorneys general will be women." <http://nyti.ms/2fzM5PS>

USA TODAY - "A 2,000-mile search for answers": "'Build the Wall.' Three words energized a campaign. But could it be done? What would it cost? What would it accomplish? Our search for answers became this, a landmark new report, 'The Wall.' The task was massive. We flew the entire border, drove it too. More than 30 reporters and photographers interviewed migrants, farmers, families, tribal members - even a human smuggler. We joined Border Patrol agents on the ground, in a tunnel, at sea. We patrolled with vigilantes, walked the line with ranchers. We scoured government maps, fought for property records." <https://usat.ly/2fhYxac>

-- "As Trump mulls refugee cap, DHS officials raise red flags," by Andrew Restuccia and Ted Hesson: "Department of Homeland Security officials have warned the White House that they may have trouble processing 50,000 refugees next year, putting additional pressure on President Donald Trump to lower the cap on refugees entering the United States to the lowest point in decades. In private meetings with White House officials in recent weeks, DHS officials have raised logistical concerns about handling 50,000 refugees in fiscal year 2018 if the president decides to maintain the cap that he imposed as part of the travel ban, according to two administration officials.

"One of the administration officials said the department was swamped with a backlog of asylum applications, which have skyrocketed in recent years. In June, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services had roughly 275,000 pending 'affirmative' asylum cases - when someone arrives in the U.S. and requests safe haven. The figure amounts to a more than 600 percent increase in the backlog compared with December 2013." <http://politi.co/2fiMdX6>

***** **A message from UC Davis:** Ranked first in the world for veterinary medicine, UC Davis believes collaborating across disciplines in animal, human and environmental health is the best way to advance the health of all creatures great and small. Using this "One Health" approach to problem solving, our research - much of which is federally funded - is resulting in cost-saving, translatable treatments for cancer, breakthroughs in stem cell therapy, increased awareness and management of emerging zoonotic diseases, better protection for endangered species, and comprehensive responses to environmental crises like oil spills and floods. Learn more about UC Davis health innovation at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

MEDIAWATCH -- "Bannon orders Breitbart to step up negative coverage of Trump-backed candidate," by CNN's Oliver Darcy: "Steve Bannon on Tuesday morning ordered top editors at Breitbart to step up its overwhelmingly negative coverage of the Alabama Senate candidate backed by President Trump, a person familiar with the matter told CNN. Shortly after Bannon told top editors to increase the site's volume of reporting on the race, Matthew Boyle, Breitbart's Washington editor, told staff 'the only story that matters until next week is Alabama.' 'As of now, everyone is working on the Alabama race,' Boyle wrote in a message obtained by CNN in the company's internal Slack channel. 'If anyone has any questions please let me know.'" <http://cnnmon.ie/2yoNsbU>

-- "CNN's Sister Network Is Hosting An Event At Anthony Scaramucci's Restaurant," by BuzzFeed's Steven Perlberg: "Three months after CNN forced out three staffers over a retracted Russia story involving Anthony Scaramucci, the cable network's sister channel, HLN, will host a press luncheon at the former White House communications director's steakhouse. The Wednesday event at Hunt & Fish Club, where founding partner Scaramucci often holds court, will toast a new program hosted by conservative commentator S.E. Cupp. ... When asked why HLN was hosting a press luncheon at a restaurant connected to Scaramucci, HLN spokesperson Alison Rudnick said the story was 'silly' while also trying to place in this story what time Cupp's show airs. 'I have a great relationship with CNN and thrilled they picked H and F as the venue,' Scaramucci said in a text message to BuzzFeed News." <http://bzfd.it/2xll4rr>

DESSERT -- "What Trump Really Eats For Dinner, According to Chef David Burke," by Eater DC's Tim Ebner - **Q:** "Let's talk about the steak order heard around the world. In February, President Trump came here and ordered his steak well-done and with ketchup. What was your reaction?" **Burke:** "Well, first off he doesn't order it with ketchup, and he doesn't eat it with ketchup. What we make for the president normally is a piece of Dover sole. Or he'll have a hamburger, or a steak, or a shrimp cocktail. But he usually eats Dover sole. And you know what? I have no problem with a well-done steak. ... As far as the ketchup goes, [Trump] likes French fries, and most likely the ketchup was for his fries." <http://bit.ly/2xmmbem>

Playbookers

SPOTTED at the Ritz Carlton last night in the West End: Al Cardenas, Ana Navarro, Steve Schmidt, Alex Pappas, Jamie Weinstein and Michelle Fields.

OUT AND ABOUT IN NYC - ANDY LACK, the chairman of NBC News and MSNBC, threw Katy Tur a book party to celebrate the release of "Unbelievable" at the Pool Lounge last night. **Pics of Katy -- with Andy and her fiancé Tony Dokoupil of CBS News** <http://bit.ly/2filmcm> ... **with Al Roker and Hoda Kotb** <http://bit.ly/2ypD6Zi> ... **with Carl Bernstein** <http://bit.ly/2jJCP06> ... **with Lester Holt** <http://bit.ly/2wwlLRf>

--**SPOTTED:** Savannah Guthrie and Mike Feldman, Craig Melvin, Andrea Mitchell, Hallie Jackson, Peter Alexander, Kristen Welker, Cynthia McFadden, Ari Melber, Ayman Mohyeldin, Stephanie Ruhle, Sam Singal, Harry Smith, Jacob Soboroff, Anne Thompson, Noah Oppenheim, Don Nash, Tom Mazzaelli, Dafna Linzer, Rich Greenberg, Carol Lee, Vivian Salama, Bradd Jaffy, Anthony Terrell, Pat Burkey, Jesse Rodriguez, Savannah Sellers, Bill Bratton and Rikki Klieman, Rick Stengel, Jonathan Alter, Elise Jordan, Steve Burke, Adam Miller, Carl Bernstein, Mike Allen, Megan Murphy, Amy Chozick, Nick Confessore, Jim Rutenberg, Sopan Deb, Pat Kiernan, Brian and Jamie Stelter, Sandra Sobieraj, Tierney McAfee, Katy's brother James Tur, Stu Loeser, Hilary Rosen, Stephen Battaglio, Michael Calderone, Gabe Sherman, Brian Steinberg, Chris Ariens, Alex Steigrad, Alan Berger, Alison Callahan, and Jonathan Lyons.

--**POOL REPORT:** "On Tuesday night the Atlantic Council held its eighth annual Global Citizen Awards dinner at The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum in New York. The dinner honors individuals who best exemplify 'Global Citizenship' through their unique contributions toward improving the state of the world. This year's honorees included President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in, Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, and world-renowned Chinese pianist, educator, and philanthropist Lang Lang. The dinner ended with a special performance by Lang Lang."

SPOTTED: Sophie Gregoire Trudeau, Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan, Christine Lagarde, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland, Fred Kempe, Klaus Schwab, David Gergen, Jack Lew, Capricia Marshall, Richard Edelman and Claudia Gonzalez Romo.

-- **PER ISAAC DOVERE:** "National Archives hosted a quiet screening of Alexandra Pelosi's 'The Words That Built America' on Tuesday. Her mother Nancy Pelosi attended, sitting in the front row. She said that the only senators who turned down a chance to read part of the Constitution (25 Republicans and 25 Democrats said yes) were Marco Rubio and Bernie Sanders, both of whom told her no to her face. Elizabeth Warren asked to read the emoluments clause, she said, and Ted Cruz came in to read his section, able to recite the whole Constitution by heart."

TRANSITIONS -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- Generation Opportunity has hired **Carrie Sheffield** as its new executive director. She founded Bold and started her career in

Washington working for Robert Novak. ... **Alleigh Marre** started a few weeks ago at the Pentagon as special assistant and deputy chief of staff to the Air Force Secretary, Heather Wilson. She's an alum of HHS, NRSC, Scott Walker, NRCC and Scott Brown. ... **Joanna Rosholm** has started as the deputy head of global brand strategy in the NYC office of Snap. She was press secretary for former first lady Michelle Obama. ...

... **Jake Perry**, who previously merged his firm, Jake Perry + Partners, with Crossroads Strategies in 2014, is going back on his own. ... **Lance Trover** is joining Tusk Strategies. He most recently was deputy chief of staff to Gov. Bruce Rauner and is also an NRSC and Mark Kirk alum. ... **Casey Clark** is joining the American Gaming Association as its VP of strategic comms. Clark spent 10 years at FTI Consulting, most recently as managing director of strategic comms. ... The Center for American Progress has hired Amb. **Gordon Gray** as its new COO. He was the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia during the Arab Spring and most recently was EVP of the U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Marisa Mills, director of operations and scheduling for Burson-Marsteller Worldwide Chair and CEO Don Baer and a Rob Portman and Bush WH alum, and **Randy Mills**, executive director of AML Strategic Oversight and Analytics at JPMorgan Chase, welcomed Lachlan Joseph Mills, who made his debut at 12:12 a.m. on Tuesday, weighing 8 lbs 12 oz and measuring 21.5" long. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2wG9nJq>

--**Andrew Ginsburg**, legislative director for Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.), and **Travis Chapman**, a trial attorney in the antitrust division of DOJ, recently welcomed Natalie Laura Chapman. They also have another daughter, Jamie Rebecca Chapman, who is 2 and a half years old. **Pic** <http://politi.co/2wvUsGR>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Ainsley Earhardt, co-host of "Fox & Friends". **How she thinks the Trump presidency is going:** "There are two separate answers to this question. There are those who will never support this administration. To them President Trump will never be able to do anything right. But for another group of Americans he represents a hope that the swamp and establishment D.C. will finally lose their grip on power and government will once again work for the people." **Read her Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2yoFC21>

BIRTHDAYS: Ashley Tate-Gilmore ... Keith Mason, longtime Clinton family loyalist and ex-Clinton WH official from Georgia who is now a national infrastructure advisor and private real estate investor (hat tip: Paul Begala) ... Joe Mansour, partner/digital at FP1 Strategies (h/t Ryan Williams) ... inventor Henry Samueli is 63 (h/t Jewish Insider) ... Emily Grunewald, associate director of CSIS' Middle East program (h/t Natalie Raps) ... Peter Flaherty ... Carter Lavin of the California Solar Energy Industries Association ... CNN's Cathy Straight and Kristen Holmes ... Deborah Roberts is 57 ... Crystal Wallingford ... Alejandra Campoverdi ... Moira Bagley Smith ... WashTimes' Rowan Scarborough ... Shaun Waterman of Fed Scoop ... Margaret Burge ... NPR news editor and blogger Lauren Hodges ... Bloomberg's Drew Singer ... Douglas Sellers ... Aniello

Alioto ... Dan Henning, producer for Sirius XM Radio (h/ts Mark Preston and Chris Frates) ...

... **Francesca Craig**, social secretary at the French Embassy (h/t Ben Chang) ... Politico's Reena Flores, Alicia D'Angelo and Diop Arimeta ... Lucy Vernasco of the Joint Economic Committee ... Alison Bogdonoff, Columbia Business School MBA candidate, celebrating in Munich (h/t Stephanie Benedict) ... Brent Perrin of America Rising ... TNR politics writer Graham Vyse ... CNN commentator Van Jones ... NPR's Neda Ulaby ... Marty Tolchin is 89 ... Melissa Jane Kronfeld ... Asher Allen ... Maureen Shanahan, SVP at SKDKnickerbocker ... Valerie Lapinski, head of video at Vox ... Greg Michael ... Adam Howard ... Terry Gilfillan ... Max Root ... Mark Mullery ... Kenneth Maresco ... Ashley O'Connor ... Caitlin Blair ... Nancy Bocskor ... Sarah Hawkins Warren ... Riyadh Hammad ... Sally Wendkos Olds ... Carl Zichella ... John Judge ... Mardi O'Shaughnessy ... Vanessa Kirsch ... Nancy Godfrey ... Angie Schiavoni ... Sara O'Keefe ... Clay McClure (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from UC Davis:** Ranked first in the world for veterinary medicine, UC Davis believes collaborating across disciplines in animal, human and environmental health is the best way to advance the health of all creatures great and small. Using this "One Health" approach to problem solving, our research - much of which is federally funded - is resulting in cost-saving, translatable treatments for cancer, breakthroughs in stem cell therapy, increased awareness and management of emerging zoonotic diseases, better protection for endangered species, and comprehensive responses to environmental crises like oil spills and floods. Learn more about UC Davis health innovation at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Skolnik, Samuel
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 7:12:32 PM
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Jahan – Thanks very much for these statements. Very helpful for my story. If I have follow-ups I'll be back in touch.

Cheers,

Sam Skolnik

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

Direct: (202) 416-3328

Cell: (702) 755-5729 *(On Fridays, please call my Cell)*

sskolnik@bgov.com

@samskolnik

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:10 PM
To: Skolnik, Samuel <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

It's also not accurate to call it a no-bid contract. Below is our statement about that as well:

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:09 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:08 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“The Definers contract is for news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our

previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:08 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:07 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Skolnik, Samuel [<mailto:sskolnik@bgov.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:42 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Hi Jahan –

I just sent the following email to press@epa.gov, but wanted to make sure I got some kind of response today. My questions are regarding Definers Corp.

Any help appreciated,

Sam

--

Hi all. I cover federal contracting and procurement issues for Bloomberg Government, and am working on a daily story based off of reports that EPA today has dropped the contract with Definers Corp. to help the EPA shape press coverage of the agency, through a no-bid contract.

Questions:

1 – Why did EPA drop the Definers contract?

2 – Why was this a sole-source solicitation in the first place?

3 – How did EPA decide to solicit the work from Definers Corp. specifically?

4 – What did EPA need to do to justify this as a sole-source solicitation? Did the agency do what it needed to, to abide the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other pertinent laws? What exactly was that?

5 – Does EPA believe there are inherent risks to agencies, and by extension taxpayers, in no-bid contracts? If so, what are they?

I'm looking for comment (or EPA's written thoughts, attributable to Jahan Wilcox or whoever the right person might be) by 4 p.m. today. My contact info is below.

Thank you,

Sam

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

Direct: (202) 416-3328

Cell: (702) 755-5729 *(On Fridays, please call my Cell)*

sskolnik@bgov.com

@samskolnik

To: Josh Siegel[jsiegel@washingtonexaminer.com]
Cc: John Siciliano[jsiciliano@washingtonexaminer.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 7:29:23 PM
Subject: Can you update your story - this was not no bid.

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 12/28/2017 2:49:55 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Google Year in Search 2017: OBAMA edges Trump for most-admired man in the world, and HILLARY beats Michelle -- FINEMAN leaving HuffPo for NBCNews.com -- CHRIS HUGHES and SEAN ELDRIDGE have a boy -- B'DAY: ZACH MONTELLARO

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Google Year in Search 2017

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES is at Trump International Golf Club, per today's White House pooler, Francesca Chambers of the Daily Mail.

MOST-ADMIRED MAN IN THE WORLD, per a Gallup poll: No. 1: Barack Obama, No. 2: Donald Trump. ... **17%** surveyed name Obama the most-admired man in the world. **14%** say Donald Trump is the most admired. Others receiving a mention: Pope Francis, the Rev. Billy Graham, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Elon Musk, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Bill Gates, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Jeff Bezos, the Dalai Lama and VP Mike Pence.

-- **THE MOST-ADMIRED WOMAN:** Hillary Clinton. No. 2: Michelle Obama, followed by Oprah Winfrey, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Queen Elizabeth II, Condoleezza Rice, Melania Trump, Nikki Haley, Kate Middleton and Beyonce Knowles. **The full results** <http://bit.ly/2CgKysa>

BULLETIN -- AP/KABUL: "Islamic State claims attack on Shiite center, 41 dead": "A brutal attack claimed by the Islamic State group devastated a two-story Shiite Muslim cultural center in the Afghan capital on Thursday, killing at least 41 people and wounding another 84, many suffering severe burns from the intensity of the explosions.

"The IS-linked Aamaq news agency said three bombs were used in the ferocious assault as well as a single suicide bomber who blew himself up inside the center, where scores of people had gathered to mark the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union. ... Other explosions occurred outside the building, which also houses the pro-Iranian Afghan Voice news agency, which may also have been a target in the attack." <http://bit.ly/2E7L5NA>

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- INTERGALACTIC EDITOR NO MORE! -- HOWARD

FINEMAN is leaving HuffPo to join NBCNews.com to write pieces on politics "and other topics." Howard emails: "The move makes sense. As you know, I've been reporting for years on TV as an analyst for NBC and MSNBC. It's also an online homecoming. Back when I was political correspondent at Newsweek, I was one of the first print reporters to write a column for a new venture called msnbc.com, and blogged the 2004 Democratic convention on my tiny-windowed BlackBerry -- a pioneering (and comical) exercise.

"I am thankful for seven great years at HuffPost, which I joined at Arianna Huffington's invitation when it was a start-up in SoHo (and called The Huffington Post!). I am honored to have worked with talented, innovative and dedicated colleagues in DC and in New York, led by Arianna, Tim Armstrong and Lydia Polgreen. I know a thing or two, and can say that there is no more collegial newsroom in journalism than the HuffPost DC bureau. They root for each other, and I will always root for them."

Happy Thursday. ALWAYS BE SELLING -- "Trump builds his 2018 political message by rebranding Obama's economic legacy," by Ben White and Nancy Cook: "The White House hopes to boost President Donald Trump's low approval ratings by using the economy as a centerpiece of its political message in 2018, according to three White House officials, even if many of the president's successes so far are squarely built on the legacy of former President Barack Obama.

"The trends of declining unemployment, coupled with healthy gains in the stock market, began during Obama's first term, a welcome uptick following the global economic downturn Obama inherited in 2009. The Trump administration has built on those gains, particularly in recent months. Business confidence has soared on the expectation of sweeping tax cuts as well as the administration's push to roll back regulations on everything from energy to housing to health care to labor rules.

"But hard economic data on growth, job creation and wages look very similar to the last several years under Obama. The pace of job growth actually slowed slightly to 174,000 per month in 2017 through November, compared with 187,000 per month in Obama's final year." <http://politi.co/2pOGhJV>

NEWS YOU CAN USE -- WAPO: "IRS says many who prepaid property taxes may still face cap on deductions," by Peter Jamison, Jeff Stein and Patricia Sullivan: "People across the United States rushed this week to pay their 2018 property taxes early, hoping to take advantage one last time of a federal deduction that will be scaled back under the tax-code overhaul signed by President Trump.

"On Wednesday, however, the -[IRS] announced that those prepayments could be deducted only in limited circumstances, a decision that appeared to invalidate many taxpayers' efforts and raised the prospect that local governments could come under pressure to refund millions of dollars. ...

"[T]he IRS said ... filers could only avoid the cap by paying property taxes that have been assessed in 2017. Many local governments, including most Washington-area jurisdictions, have not completed assessments for upcoming years. ...

"In the District, Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) openly encouraged homeowners last week to prepay their 2018 property taxes, either online at the D.C. Office of Tax and Revenue or at any Wells Fargo branch in the city. (Those seeking to pay at the bank locations were told to bring a 2017 property-tax invoice with them.) D.C. officials said Wednesday that they were reviewing the IRS announcement and could not yet comment on whether prepayment might benefit taxpayers." <http://wapo.st/2CfajeB>

***** **A message from Google Year in Search 2017:** In 2017, the world asked "how...?" From "how to move forward" to "how to make a difference," the questions we asked showed our shared desire to understand our experiences. Watch the film and see top trending lists from around the world at g.co/2017. *****

THE TAX LAWYER FULL EMPLOYMENT ACT, via NYT's Natalie Kitroeff: **"In a Complex Tax Bill, Let the Hunt for Loopholes Begin"**: "It was supposed to be a tax cut for manufacturers. Then it got out of control. World Wrestling Entertainment took it for producing wrestling videos. Regional gas stations claimed it because they mix ethanol with base fuel. Grocery stores asked for it because they spray their fruit so that it ripens. Pharmacies could take it because they have booths that print photos.

"Republicans in Congress passed that deduction more than a decade ago, and they repealed it in the tax bill signed on Friday by President Trump. It is a lesson in the abundant creativity of American business in interpreting the tax code. The latest overhaul could play out the same way. Already, lawyers and accountants are eyeing several provisions that investors and companies could potentially exploit.

"The bill, for example, lowers the taxes on so-called pass-through income, which is earned by partnerships and other types of businesses. Congress sold the provision as a way to help smaller companies. But lawmakers added language that allowed big real estate developers to benefit. The result could be a tax break for any company that buys and operates a building for its business.

"The new law is also supposed to encourage companies to make investments in the United States. But the rules were written in such a way that they could give businesses an incentive to keep their money in foreign countries and build factories abroad." <http://nyti.ms/2lbKpie>

THE PRESIDENT has nothing on his public schedule today.

-- **TRUMP**, speaking to the pool yesterday afternoon at a firehouse in West Palm Beach, per WaPo's Ashley Parker: "'How's the media? Good? Everyone good?' He talked about the economy was doing very well, and how the country was 'setting records in stocks.' 'How's your 401K? Doing pretty well? Doing well, right?' ... 'They're all doing well. The

401Ks are doing well, the stocks are doing well.'

"Trump then praised the tax cut that Republicans passed shortly before the winter holiday. 'So the country was really - we took a big, big beautiful ship that we're turning around, and a lot of good things are happening.' ...

"He also repeatedly stressed how much legislation he had helped pass . 'We got a lot of legislation passed. They were saying that if we got this one done, we would have succeeded with legislation. But I believe - and you would have to ask those folks who will know the real answer - we have more legislation passed, including the record was Harry Truman a long time ago. And we broke that record, so we got a lot done.'

"We have the all time record for stopping ridiculous regulations, and we're very proud of that, that's one of the reasons stocks are up to record level.' Trump went on to say that the stock market had hit an all time high 84 times since he was elected in Nov. 2016. 'So that's something you can all be proud of. That makes you all look very smart. And your families say, 'Boy are you a great investor, right?' When you have your numbers go up and your stocks go up, and everything else.'"

--"Trump falsely claims he broke a legislative record," by Nolan D. McCaskill:
<http://politi.co/2pOc25U>

THE MILITARY BOWL is today in Annapolis. Virginia takes on Navy at 1:30 p.m. ESPN is carrying the game.

REVOLVING DOOR -- WSJ'S ELI STOKOLS: "Trump White House Saw Record Number of First-Year Staff Departures": "According to Kathryn Dunn-Tenpas, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who has tracked White House turnover rates over three decades, the Trump administration's 34% turnover rate -- 21 of the 61 senior officials she has tracked have resigned, been fired or reassigned -- is much higher than that of any other administration in the last 40 years, which is as far back as Ms. Dunn-Tenpas's analysis goes. The presidency with the next-highest first-year turnover rate was Ronald Reagan's, with 17% of senior aides leaving the administration in 1981.

"Not only is the percentage double, the seniority of people leaving is extraordinarily high,' said Ms. Dunn-Tenpas. 'That's unprecedented to me. The first year always seems to have some missteps on staffing, often because the skills that worked well running a campaign don't always align with what it takes to run a government. In this case, it's a president with no experience in government and people around him who also had no experience,' she continued. 'So it's not surprising that it's higher than normal, but it's still surprising it's this high.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2E7ufhU>

THE INVESTIGATIONS ...

-- WAPO'S CAROL LEONNIG: "Trump legal team readies attack on Flynn's credibility": "President Trump's legal team plans to cast former national security

adviser Michael T. Flynn as a liar seeking to protect himself if he accuses the president or his senior aides of any wrongdoing, according to three people familiar with the strategy. ...

"Trump's legal team has seized on Flynn's agreement with prosecutors as fodder for a possible defense, if necessary. In court filings, the retired lieutenant general admitted that he lied to the FBI about conversations he had with the Russian ambassador to the United States during the December 2016 transition. 'He's said it himself: He's a liar,' said one person helping craft the strategy who was granted anonymity to describe private conversations." <http://wapo.st/2pLa46k>

-- **MICHAEL ISIKOFF** in Yahoo, **"Mueller probe outgrows its 'witch hunt' phase":** "[S]ources familiar with the probe say that such a rapid conclusion is - as one put it - 'fanciful.' Mueller and his team, they say, are pursuing new leads, interrogating new witnesses and collecting a mountain of new evidence, including subpoenaed bank records and thousands of emails from the campaign and the Trump transition.

"In just the last few weeks, his prosecutors have begun questioning [RNC] staffers about the party digital operation that worked with the Trump campaign to target voters in key swing states. They are seeking to determine if the joint effort was related to the activities of Russian trolls and bots aimed at influencing the American electorate, according to two of the sources." <https://yhoo.it/2zHame8>

COUNTERPOINT -- "Trump Had A Good Year Getting Judges Confirmed, But He's Still A Long Way From Reshaping The Courts," by BuzzFeed's Zoe Tillman:

"Trump's potential to shift the ideological balance of the courts is far from fully realized: There are still 160 vacancies in the federal appeals and district courts and 870 active judgeships. ... Several judges appointed by Democratic presidents told BuzzFeed News they are hesitant to step down and create new vacancies while Trump is in office. 'Given the caliber of nominees I'm seeing, I'm not comfortable creating a spot that might be filled by someone consistent with the qualifications, or lack of qualifications, of some of the folks I've seen nominated,' a federal appeals judge confirmed under President Bill Clinton said." <http://bzfd.it/2ImNxHr>

-- **"Trump talked tough but hasn't reined in college tuition,"** by Benjamin Wermund: "On the campaign trail, President Donald Trump railed against elite universities that he said were 'paying more to hedge funds and private equity managers than they are spending on tuition assistance.' He vowed to 'push colleges to cut the skyrocketing cost of tuition.'

"But in the year since, his administration has done little to help low- and middle-income Americans afford the nation's best schools, even as data released this year show just how pervasive economic inequality is on American college campuses. Many of the nation's top schools serve more students from the top 1 percent of earners than the bottom 60 percent combined, according to a study by the Equality of Opportunity Project.

"The Trump administration, instead, has largely sent the message that those four-year universities aren't for everyone - a talking point that groups working to expand college access, especially for low-income students, say threatens to exacerbate the problem." <http://politi.co/2E7iB6A>

CAN'T STOP, WON'T STOP -- AL.COM'S ANNA BEAHM: "The Roy Moore campaign filed a complaint Wednesday to have the election certification delayed 'until a full investigation of voter fraud is conducted,' according to a statement from his campaign.

"The complaint includes affidavits from three 'national election integrity experts' who claim election fraud occurred and a statement from Moore saying he successfully completed a polygraph test confirming the representations of misconduct made against him during the campaign are 'completely false.' Moore has not conceded the election more than two weeks after he was defeated by Democrat Doug Jones. ...

"One of the three experts, Richard Charnin, said the possibility of the election results in the Jefferson County precincts happening naturally is 'less than one in 15 billion,' according to the campaign. ... [Secretary of State John] Merrill, Gov. Kay Ivey and Attorney General Steve Marshall, who make up the state canvassing board, will meet at 1 p.m. in Merrill's office in the Capitol to certify the election results." <http://bit.ly/2CfdzGZ>

UPDATE -- The Trump-Ryan-McConnell confab at Camp David is Jan. 6-7, per the AP.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump shakes hands Dec. 27 with firefighters at West Palm Beach Fire Rescue in Florida. | Evan Vucci/AP Photo

CLICKERS - POLITICO MAGAZINE: "Why They Mattered: Remembering 30 politicos who died in 2017": "There may have been an unusual number of celebrity deaths in 2016, but 2017 saw the departure of no shortage of notables. As we do each year, Politico Magazine invited friends, colleagues, scholars and observers to remember dozens of figures who died over the past year after having led lives that shaped American and global politics in all kinds of ways-from television screens and comedy clubs to the pages of newspapers and magazines to the halls of government."

<http://politi.co/2BNMFmh>

--N.Y. TIMES MAGAZINE's annual "The Lives They Lived" issue

<http://nyti.ms/2CqeQuZ> ... "The Things They Loved" <http://nyti.ms/2CgpTEu> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2C3jxf0>

HOLIDAY WEEK TALKERS - "How Trump could kill the Iran nuclear deal in January," by Michael Crowley: "President Donald Trump allowed the Iran nuclear deal to survive through 2017, but the new year will offer him another chance to blow up the agreement - and critics and supporters alike believe he may take it. By mid-January, the president will face new legal deadlines to choose whether to slap U.S. sanctions back on Tehran. Senior lawmakers and some of Trump's top national security officials are trying to preserve the agreement.

"But the deal's backers fear Trump has grown more willing to reject the counsel of his foreign policy team, as he did with his recent decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The decision represents an opportunity for Trump to deliver on a campaign promise to rip up the Iran deal, one he has repeatedly deferred at the urging of senior officials." <http://politi.co/2Dr1ECW>

-- **"How the banks won over Washington again,"** by Zach Warmbrodt: "Less than a decade after being blamed for fueling the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, banks are winning again in Washington. The rebound for the lenders has been so remarkable that Republicans and Democrats in Congress are pushing to scale back financial regulations imposed in the wake of the meltdown - one of the few areas where the two parties agree. President Donald Trump, who once vowed not to let Wall Street 'get away with murder,' has dropped the demonizing campaign rhetoric and recruited industry veterans to his administration.

"His Treasury Department has drawn up a series of recommendations for trimming the post-crisis rule book. Even the Federal Reserve, the top banking regulator, is working to relax safeguards. Lawmakers and regulators are rethinking policies including loosening mortgage protections, curtailing so-called stress tests that gauge how banks would fare during economic turmoil, and simplifying capital requirements for smaller lenders. Many of the proposals are targeted rollbacks rather than a wholesale repeal of regulations, but they would have a meaningful impact on the industry." <http://politi.co/2lmtHvR>

-- **MICHAEL GRUNWALD, "Everything Is Awesome! Well, Almost":** "I come bearing good news! The economy is growing! OK, it's actually been growing for eight straight years. But as President Donald Trump keeps pointing out, it's grown at a solid 3 percent annual rate for the past two quarters, 'a number nobody thought they'd see for a long period of time.' OK, OK, the economy actually did hit that 3 percent quarterly growth number eight times during President Barack Obama's time in office. Nevertheless, it's a good number. ... America's steady upward economic trajectory has continued under an unconventional new president, confounding the liberal pundits who predicted insta-doom." <http://politi.co/2E5GMCp>

-- **JUST POSTED -- VANITY FAIR'S "THE HIVE": "ISIS 3.0: HOW SILICON VALLEY GAVE RISE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF TERROR,"** by Haroon Ullah, author of "Digital World War: Islamists, Extremists and the Fight for Cyber Supremacy" <http://bit.ly/2BQlmry> ... **\$14.05 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2mcfDbY>

IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING ... REX TILLERSON in the NYT: "I Am Proud of Our Diplomacy" <http://nyti.ms/2lfaNYP>

BUT ... -- "Documents shed light on North Korea's startling gains in sea-based missile technology," by WaPo's Joby Warrick: "A few months after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a group of American investors and Russian scientists struck a deal to begin marketing one of the crown jewels of Moscow's strategic arsenal: an entire family of missiles designed for launch from submarines. Up for sale were powerful missiles called 'Calm' and 'Ripple,' built to lob heavy warheads into space from a barge or a submarine tube, and a new model called 'Surf' that could be rolled off the side of a ship and fired straight out of the water. The idea of the joint venture, as one of its U.S. partners wrote in early 1993, was to link American satellite companies to a top Russian weapons laboratory to 'convert potentially threatening submarine missiles into peaceful space boosters.'

"The Americans quickly ran aground on a series of legal and bureaucratic barriers, but the Russians forged ahead with a new partner willing to pay cash for Soviet military technology: North Korea. More than two decades later, some of the Soviet designs are reappearing, one after another, in surprisingly sophisticated missiles that have turned up on North Korean launchpads over the past two years. Now, newly uncovered documents offer fresh clues about the possible origins of those technical advances, some of which seemed to outside observers to have come from nowhere." <http://wapo.st/2CiCOG5>

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WAPO'S DAVE WEIGEL: "Ryan's 'pro-white' primary foe denounced by Breitbart after his anti-Semitic tweets": "A Wisconsin businessman challenging House Speaker Paul D. Ryan in next year's congressional primaries denounced 'globalists from both parties' Wednesday, after his anti-Semitic tweets prompted Stephen K. Bannon and Breitbart News to distance themselves from his campaign.

"Paul Nehlen, who is challenging Ryan for the second time, responded to the accusations of anti-Semitism by saying he was 'pro-white' and opposed to double standards. 'Allow me to answer with this question: If pro-White is White supremacy, what is pro-Jewish?' Nehlen told The Washington Post in a text message. 'I reject being called a White Supremacist, because clearly Pro-White isn't White Supremacy unless Pro-Jewish is Jewish Supremacy.'" <http://wapo.st/2pOqFG3>

--"Bannon adviser: Ryan challenger Paul Nehlen is 'dead to us' after inflammatory

tweets," by CNN's Oliver Darcy: <http://cnnmon.ie/2pQSTQM>

-- **GUYS.** Nehlen lost to Ryan by 69 points in 2016.

K STREET FILES -- HEATHER PODESTA's annual list of funny New Year's resolutions from her firm Invariant. Some of our favorites: "Insist on free toaster from Deutsche Bank with \$285m loan" and "Remove opera gloves before entering federal buildings." <http://politi.co/2C4Egie>

IVANKA INC. -- "How Ivanka Trump Is a Walking Billboard for Her Namesake Fashion Business: The president's daughter and adviser put the company into a trust, but continues to wear its merchandise, feeding a publicity machine," by WSJ's Jean Eaglesham and Lisa Schwartz: "Ivanka Trump wore a peach dress with ruffles, paired with pale taupe shoes, to a White House meeting with technology executives in June. 'Just peachy!' the Daily Mail newspaper declared online, above 14 photographs of the first daughter's outfit. 'The best news is that you can buy this exact dress at Zappos and it's only \$138. Follow the link at right to their website.'

"The dress and shoes were both from Ms. Trump's namesake brand, Ivanka Trump, which she still owns and from which she receives a multimillion-dollar annual income. ... The Wall Street Journal reviewed Ms. Trump's outfits in her Twitter, Facebook and Instagram postings about official appearances between March 29, when she became a White House adviser, and the end of October. Star Style, a celebrity-fashion website, identified the products. The analysis showed that Ivanka Trump dresses, shoes, bags or jewelry appeared in 46 of the 68 outfits reviewed, or 68%." <http://on.wsj.com/2BPJrid>

MEDIAWATCH -- HOLLYWOOD REPORTER'S JEREMY BARR: "Reporter's Notebook: 2017's Unanswered Media Questions": "Who will replace Matt Lauer on NBC's 'Today' and Charlie Rose on 'CBS This Morning'? ... Will NBC's investigation into Lauer's conduct indict any current or former NBC executives? ... Will Megyn Kelly keep up her momentum? ... Who will emerge victorious in the court case stemming from the federal government's lawsuit to stop AT&T's purchase of Time Warner? ... Will Sinclair Broadcasting's purchase of Tribune Media go through? ... Will Greta Van Susteren come back to television? ... What about Bill O'Reilly? ...

"Will Fox News hosts get tougher on Donald Trump? ... Will Trump give another interview to a national television outlet that's not part of the Fox News family? ... When is PBS going to pick a new co-anchor on flagship news program 'PBS NewsHour'? ... How will Conde Nast adjust to a magazine industry landscape now dominated by Meredith Corp. and Hearst?" <http://bit.ly/2E5JOXm>

-- **"Truck blocks cameras from filming Trump on golf course,"** by CNN's Tom Kludt: "Photo and video crews were stymied in their attempts to film President Trump on a golf course Wednesday, an apparent response to CNN's recent footage of the commander-in-chief on the links. As the president completed another round at Trump International

Golf Club in West Palm Beach, Florida, a large white truck obscured nearby journalists -- who were positioned on public property -- from getting a shot of Trump on their cameras. When CNN's photojournalist moved his camera, the truck likewise moved, blocking the picture. ...

"Cathy Milhoan, a spokeswoman for the Secret Service, said the agency was not responsible for the truck. 'The USSS is in the business of protection and investigations not in commissioning vehicles to block the media's view of the President's golf swing,' Milhoan said." ***With a 90-second video*** <http://cnnmon.ie/2C2I19f>

--"BuzzFeed has fired its White House correspondent after allegations of inappropriate comments to a colleague," by Business Insider's Maxwell Tani: "Adrian Carrasquillo was let go following an internal investigation, a representative told Business Insider on Wednesday. 'We are saddened by these circumstances, but we take these issues extremely seriously,' the representative said. 'We're committed to ensuring that BuzzFeed remains a place where everyone is treated respectfully by his or her peers.'

"Last month, BuzzFeed News began investigating several of its staffers after their names appeared on a Google spreadsheet titled 'S---y Media Men' that was being passed around media circles. ... Carrasquillo's name appeared on a version of the list seen by Business Insider." <http://read.bi/2BOeg6K>

VALLEY TALK -- "Apple Boosts Pay of CEO Tim Cook, Other Executives: Technology firm's raises come after rare pay cut in prior fiscal year," by WSJ's Tripp Mickle: "Mr. Cook's total compensation for the fiscal year, which ended in September, jumped 47% -- to \$12.8 million -- the largest bump among the five executives listed in Apple's annual proxy filing. Mr. Cook's pay increase was driven by his cash bonus, which was hinged on exceeding the revenue and profit targets set by the board." <http://on.wsj.com/2IjsB4b>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: DNI Dan Coats last night sitting behind the Butler bench at the Georgetown basketball game with his security detail

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - CHRIS HUGHES, co-chair of the Economic Security Project and co-founder of Facebook, and **SEAN ELDRIDGE,** founder and president of Stand Up America and a former congressional candidate, have welcomed David Hughes Eldridge. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2CiPDzW> ... <http://bit.ly/2Ic0qox> ... <http://bit.ly/2C4KBdT>

-- Dan Hirschhorn, director of news of Time Inc. and TIME, and **JJ El-Far,** the general manager of Theater Mitu in Brooklyn, welcomed Ellis Isaac Hirschhorn, born 11:51 p.m. on Wednesday at 7 pounds 8 ounces. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2DrvCXu>

-- **Merideth Potter**, SVP at GMMB, and **Jason Potter**, a staffer for the Senate Armed Services Committee, recently welcomed Judson Rogers Potter, born at Sibley Memorial Hospital, weighing 8 lbs 10 oz. **Pic with big sister Quincy** <http://bit.ly/2zGXV1C>

ENGAGED -- Michael McAdams, a regional press secretary for the NRSC and former communications director for Rep. Chris Collins (R-N.Y.), proposed to **Alley Hampton**, an interior designer, on Wednesday night at the Montage in Laguna Beach, California. "They were joined afterwards by family and friends at The Deck. The couple met on a blind date at Le Diplomate." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2pNoCSZ>

-- **Bobby McMillin**, general counsel for the Senate HELP Committee and a Chambliss and Romney alum, proposed to his girlfriend and coworker **Virginia Heppner**, a professional staff member for Senate HELP. They got engaged Christmas Day on top of Humpback Rock outside Charlottesville, Virginia. "They met at work, and their romance blossomed as it so often does... drafting health cybersecurity legislation." **Pic** <http://politi.co/2DrqH8Y> ... **Instapic** <http://bit.ly/2CiQL9e>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: NPR special correspondent **Melissa Block**. **An interesting book she's recently read:** "I just re-read 'The Age of Innocence' by Edith Wharton. Apart from her deliciously sly observations of New York society circa 1920, the novel has surprising resonance now in this #metoo moment. Wharton writes so powerfully about the social pressures exerted on women, and how their lives were constrained or their passions derailed by forces beyond their control. A century later, here we are." **Read her Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2E8azds>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): GSA Administrator Emily Murphy (hat tip: Emily J. McBride)

BIRTHDAYS: Susanna Quinn, founder and CEO of on-demand fitness and beauty service Veluxe, celebrating with female friends at a small dinner hosted by Gloria Riviera, Stephanie Cutter and Dana Bash (h/ts hubby Jack and Matt Dornic) ... Seth Meyers is 44 ... Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) is 73 ... former Sen. Tim Johnson (D-S.D.) is 71 ... former Arkansas Gov. Mike Beebe is 71 ... Politico's Zach Montellaro, who helps bring you Playbook every morning ... Ian Wishingrad, founder of New York-based BigEyedWish ... Mark Katz is 54 ... Shari Yost Gold ... Debbie Willhite ... Michele Altemus ... David Eisner, CEO at Repair the World (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Bloomberg Politics' Sahil Kapur is 31 ... Politico's Han Ah-Sue ... David Dunn ... former Rep. Jim McDermott (D-Wash.) is 81 ... former Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-Ala.) is 7-0 ... DLCC national political director Kevin Boyd ... Christa Robinson, SVP of comms. for CBS News (h/t CBS News comms shop) ... D.J. Jordan, communications director for Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) ... AP economics writer Josh Boak ... Cam Cullman, account manager at BBDO Worldwide ... CEB's Will Candrick ...

... **Ed McFadden**, secretary of comms for the Archdiocese of Washington, celebrating by "sharing multiple vintages of Cade and Oro Puro wines with friends" (h/t Blain

Rethmeier) ... Boeing's Alexa Marrero (h/t Phil Musser) ... Kathy Kraninger, White House OMB associate director and Bush 43 DHS alum ... Katy Montgomery, Chertoff Group communications director and Bush 43 DHS and WH alum (h/ts Ed Cash) ... Lou Gallo is 6-0 ... Virginia Del. Jennifer McClellan ... Janne Emilie Nolan ... Chris Cooper 47 ... Raquel Wojnar ... Douglas Wiley ... Jack Lynch is 67 ... Adrienne Fox Luscombe ... Savannah Short ... Erica Martinson, D.C. reporter for Alaska Dispatch News, who last month welcomed Archer Robert Artis into the world - **pic** <http://bit.ly/2BXrFgR> ... Corinne Elise McGrath ... Nick Sauer ... Randall Snow ... Mike Snyder ... Molly Varoga ... David Drews (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... former UAW union president Owen Bieber is 88 (h/t AP)

***** **A message from Google Year in Search 2017:** As this year draws to a close, Google analyzed Search Trends data to see what the world was searching for. The data showed that 2017 was the year we asked "how..." How do wildfires start? How to calm a dog during a storm? How to make a protest sign? All of the "how" searches featured in the Year in Search film were searched at least 10 times more this year than ever before. These questions show our shared desire to understand our experiences and come to each other's aid.

From "how to watch the eclipse" and "how to shoot like Curry," to "how to move forward" and "how to make a difference," here's to this Year in Search. Watch the film and see top trending lists from around the world at g.co/2017. *****

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From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Mon 9/11/2017 7:24:24 PM
Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17
EPA Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17.docx

EPA Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17

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NTK Network: Exclusive AP Story Relied on EPA Intern and Disgruntled Employee

An Associated Press report regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) effort to secure 54 toxic Superfund sites that are in the path of Hurricane Irma relied on a former EPA intern and an employee who lied about why she left the agency as its sources. The story, which was titled, "AP Exclusive: Toxic sites in likely path of Irma," was written by Michael Bisecker and Jason Dearen, who painted Stephen Sweeney as "a former employee in EPA's office of policy." The Washington Examiner reported, however: "According to federal employment data, Sweeney worked at the EPA for barely more than a year as an "Administration and Office Support Student Trainee." People in less bureaucratic circles call that a paid internship."

E&E News: House to debate EPA regional office closures

The House will weigh blocking any potential plans to cut or close U.S. EPA's regional offices this week as it completes work on a broad, fiscal 2018 spending package. The regional office proposal is one of a handful of remaining amendments to the Interior-EPA section of the appropriations bill, which would also fund the departments of Commerce, State, Justice, Transportation and Agriculture (E&E Daily, Sept. 5). The House is expected to pass the legislation this week, after delaying a vote late last week to focus on a Hurricane Harvey aid package (Greenwire, Sept. 8).

BNA: EPA Chief Pledges to Secure Toxic Sites in Irma's Storm Path

The Trump administration is applying lessons from Hurricane Harvey's drenching of southeast Texas as it secures toxic waste sites in the path of Hurricane Irma, U.S. environmental chief Scott Pruitt said. The Environmental Protection Agency's main goal is to make sure there are "enough people on the ground" to quickly assess the integrity of at-risk chemical sites and respond to needs as the monster storm moves through, Pruitt said. Technical staff already are working to secure about 80 Superfund sites in Irma's path from Miami to North Carolina, including a former pesticide plant, military base, and machine shop. "Operationally, we've tried

to make sure we apply the same type of approach we used in Texas,” Pruitt, the EPA's administrator, said in a Sept. 7 interview. “Because of the area and the amount of population that's affected in Florida, we're trying to be even more aggressive.”

Reuters: US Coast Guard, EPA Cleaning up a Dozen Texas Chemical Spills After Harvey

The U.S. Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency are working with Texas state regulators to clean up oil and chemicals spilled from a dozen industrial facilities after flooding from Hurricane Harvey, authorities said. The spills came from oil refineries, fuel terminals and other businesses, but EPA spokeswoman Terri White said it was not possible to provide an estimate for the amounts spilled. "Initial reports were based on observation," White said. "Some spills were already being cleaned up by the time EPA or other officials arrived to assess them and others had already migrated offsite."

AG Week: EPA: Thumbs-up to 'energy beet' idea

The Environmental Protection Agency predicted it might take six months to do an initial evaluation of "energy beets" for their environmental footprint as a feedstock for biofuels. Six years — not months — later the agency has a thumbs up on energy beets as a feedstock — rating it for greenhouse gases and other environmental issues. Proponents say it's the first of three hurdles in making it accepted as a viable biofuel. Dave Ripplinger, a North Dakota State University bioenergy specialist, and Maynard Helgaas, an agricultural businessman who has been pushing the idea for eight years, say they're grateful for a positive report, despite the time lag, and look forward to the next phases that could finally create an industry that qualifies for the highest subsidies.

Delaware News Journal: EPA extends Delaware pollution waiver in attempt to lower gas prices

Responding to a 40-cent spike in gas prices, regulators on Friday gave Delaware fuel stations further permission to sell stockpiles of winter-blend gasoline. The move is "to ensure stability of the state's fuel supply in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey's impact on gas production in Texas, where five refineries remain shuttered," said Michael Globetti, spokesman for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, in a statement. Delaware saw some of the largest upward swings in gas prices nationally after Harvey pummeled the Texas Gulf Coast in August, and limited gasoline production at more than a dozen refineries.

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National Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17

Reuters: Mexico rescinds Texas aid offer after huge quake

Mexico has withdrawn its offer to aid victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas due to demands on its emergency services from a massive earthquake that struck late last week, the foreign ministry said in a statement on Monday. Mexico's government offered to send food, beds, generators, mobile kitchens as well as doctors after torrential rains from Harvey flooded vast parts of Houston. But the earthquake that struck southern Mexico on Thursday killed at least 96 people and left some 2.5 million people in need of aid. Hurricane Katia also hit the Gulf state of Veracruz this weekend and heavy rains have stretched emergency services.

Politico: Trump takes travel-ban exemption fight back to SCOTUS

The Trump administration is returning to the Supreme Court in an effort to overturn lower court rulings crimping the application of President Donald Trump's travel ban executive order. Justice Department lawyers asked the high court Monday to allow authorities to keep up a block on many refugees covered by Trump's ban. However, the administration threw in the towel for now on efforts to insist that grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins of U.S. citizens be covered by the ban despite the Supreme Court ordering an exemption for close family members.

The Wall Street Journal: Dow Climbs Back Above 22000 as Fears Ease

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed back above 22000 for the first time in nearly a month, as investors' fears eased about North Korea and Hurricane Irma. Stocks rose broadly and haven assets retreated, a reversal from last week when major U.S. stock indexes, the dollar and Treasury yields fell as investors worried about worst-case scenarios from summer storms and threats from North Korea. The Dow industrials rose 266 points, or 1.2%, to 22063 in recent trading. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite jumped 1.1%.

TRUMP TWEETS

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/exclusive-ap-story-relied-on-epa-intern-and-disgruntled-employee/>

Exclusive AP Story Relied on EPA Intern and Disgruntled Employee

By: No author listed, 9/11/17, 2:03 p.m.

An Associated Press report regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) effort to secure 54 toxic Superfund sites that are in the path of Hurricane Irma relied on a former EPA intern and an employee who lied about why she left the agency as its sources.

The story, which was titled, “AP Exclusive: Toxic sites in likely path of Irma,” was written by Michael Bisecker and Jason Dearen, who painted Stephen Sweeney as “a former employee in EPA’s office of policy.”

The Washington Examiner reported, however: “According to federal employment data, Sweeney worked at the EPA for barely more than a year as an “Administration and Office Support Student Trainee.” People in less bureaucratic circles call that a paid internship.”

The second source that the AP reporters used, Elizabeth Southerland, was formerly the director of science and technology in EPA’s Office of Water. Southerland told the AP that EPA should do more “to quickly respond with careful monitoring after the storm.”

The Washington Examiner also reported on why the AP citing Southerland was problematic:

“Like the intern, there’s reason to doubt Southerland. After more than 30 years at the EPA, she reportedly quit in protest of budget cuts and Pruitt’s leadership. But the decision had more to do with retirement than political protest. A Washington Free Beacon report found that Southerland was eligible for a pension.”

“None of any of this disqualifies Southerland or Sweeney per se. They might well know some science things. But it’s unsettling for a multinational news agency that’s reprinted as journalism’s gold standard. The AP should be able to find better sources than a biased analyst and an intern.”

It appears that the AP's editorial standards are a little lax when it comes to publishing a piece that attacks the Trump administration.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060060215>

House to debate EPA regional office closures

By George Cahlink, 9/11/17

The House will weigh blocking any potential plans to cut or close U.S. EPA's regional offices this week as it completes work on a broad, fiscal 2018 spending package.

The regional office proposal is one of a handful of remaining amendments to the Interior-EPA section of the appropriations bill, which would also fund the departments of Commerce, State, Justice, Transportation and Agriculture (E&E Daily, Sept. 5).

The House is expected to pass the legislation this week, after delaying a vote late last week to focus on a Hurricane Harvey aid package (Greenwire, Sept. 8).

The EPA office amendment, offered by Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.), comes in response to speculation the agency could shutter some of its 10 regional branches.

Lawmakers' worries spiked earlier this year when an internal EPA budget hinted at closing some of the offices, but Administrator Scott Pruitt said no discussions are actually happening. This week will be the House's first chance to vote on the issue.

Polis acknowledged Pruitt's assurances last week but said his plan would make it much harder. The congressman noted EPA regional offices are at the forefront of disaster responses, like Harvey in Texas, and also address the "very real threat of climate change."

Other amendments

The House this week will also consider a proposal from Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.) to prohibit spending for enforcing an Obama administration EPA rule related to methane emissions. The Trump administration already has sought to block the rule, but that plan has run into resistance from the courts.

Mullin said on the floor last week that the methane rule is a "job-killing regulation" that will cost the economy \$530 million annually by limiting oil and gas operations.

Most Democrats are certain to oppose the amendment, seeing the rule as part of a broader push to cap emissions that cause climate change.

Mullin and Rep. Scott Perry (R-Pa.) will also push an amendment that would prohibit funds from being used to measure the social cost of carbon. Mullin noted the House already has backed similar provisions 11 times in recent years.

Rep. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.) will get a vote on a proposal that would cut EPA funding by \$1.9 billion to \$5.6 billion, which he said would match the administration's request for the agency for fiscal 2018.

But the amendment may face bipartisan opposition as lawmakers have already resisted other proposals to make steep cuts to EPA funding in the bill.

Once the package is completed, the House will have finished all 12 fiscal 2018 spending bills, although the Senate has yet to pass any.

As a result, the recently approved Harvey aid measure extended current fiscal 2017 spending about three months beyond the start of the new fiscal year to Dec. 8 to buy members time to hammer out a final spending accord.

BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=120234427&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

EPA Chief Pledges to Secure Toxic Sites in Irma's Storm Path

By Jennifer A. Dlouhy, 9/11/17

The Trump administration is applying lessons from Hurricane Harvey's drenching of southeast Texas as it secures toxic waste sites in the path of Hurricane Irma, U.S. environmental chief Scott Pruitt said.

The Environmental Protection Agency's main goal is to make sure there are “enough people on the ground” to quickly assess the integrity of at-risk chemical sites and respond to needs as the monster storm moves through, Pruitt said. Technical staff already are working to secure about 80 Superfund sites in Irma's path from Miami to North Carolina, including a former pesticide plant, military base, and machine shop.

“Operationally, we've tried to make sure we apply the same type of approach we used in Texas,” Pruitt, the EPA's administrator, said in a Sept. 7 interview. “Because of the area and the amount of population that's affected in Florida, we're trying to be even more aggressive.”

The EPA faced some criticism for its response to Hurricane Harvey in Texas, as it was not able to immediately inspect some toxic Superfund sites that were flooded or inaccessible. After chemicals at one plant exploded, spewing fumes into the air, the agency said an initial analysis showed “no high levels of toxic chemicals.” Earlier on Sept. 7, local police officers filed a lawsuit against the plant owners, Arkema SA, saying they were sickened by the fumes from the plant.

Nearly 200 EPA personnel were deployed in Texas. The agency has about 77 people working on Irma related efforts and another seven are on the way.

Back-to-back hurricanes hitting the U.S. threaten to strain the federal government's resources, prompting the Senate to pass a \$15.25 billion relief bill Sept. 7, and renewing a debate about the size and scope of federal agencies.

The Trump administration has proposed cutting nearly a third of the EPA's budget for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1 and culling roughly 3,200 employees from the agency's 15,000-member workforce, a process that has already begun as hundreds of workers accept buyouts.

Pruitt stressed that the EPA has not been hit by budget reductions yet, as Congress weighs how much to spend on the agency. Both Republican and Democratic lawmakers have signaled that they will refuse to make the steep budget cuts President Donald Trump is seeking for EPA.

“Congress is working through the budget as we speak, so there's been no impact in that regard,” Pruitt said. “It's more of just simply allocating personnel and prioritizing personnel—making sure that at the end of the day it's the local officials and the state officials in partnership with the EPA.”

Reuters

<https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2017-09-11/us-coast-guard-epa-cleaning-up-a-dozen-texas-chemical-spills-after-harvey>

US Coast Guard, EPA Cleaning up a Dozen Texas Chemical Spills After Harvey

By Emily Flitter, 9/11/17

The U.S. Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency are working with Texas state regulators to clean up oil and chemicals spilled from a dozen industrial facilities after flooding

from Hurricane Harvey, authorities said.

The spills came from oil refineries, fuel terminals and other businesses, but EPA spokeswoman Terri White said it was not possible to provide an estimate for the amounts spilled.

"Initial reports were based on observation," White said. "Some spills were already being cleaned up by the time EPA or other officials arrived to assess them and others had already migrated offsite."

Refineries owned by Valero Energy Corp in Houston, Motiva Inc in Port Arthur, and Exxon Mobile Corp in Baytown, were among the facilities that had reported spills, according to White. Representatives for those companies did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Officials also reported spills at Kinder Morgan Inc's Pasadena fuel storage terminal and at an oil terminal in Texas City owned by NuStar Energy LP.

Kinder Morgan spokeswoman Lexey Long said on Monday the company reported a spill of 500 barrels of gasoline on Aug. 27. Workers covered the spill with a foam blanket and set up a barrier to keep the public away.

"The spill has been fully remediated," she said.

NuStar representatives had no immediate comment.

Two wastewater treatment plants - Integrity Golden Triangle Marine Services of Port Arthur and San Jacinto River and Rail in Beaumont - also appeared on the list of spill response locations that EPA provided to Reuters.

San Jacinto River and Rail said it spilled a "foamy emulsion" when floodwaters overtopped the berms around its facility.

"Some is on our property and some is on adjacent property which has already been cleaned up," said spokesman Dennis Winkler. "We do not expect a long-term environmental impact. We do not expect there will be any air impact or health impacts."

Representatives from Integrity Golden Triangle did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The liquid spills come in addition to more than a million pounds of toxic emissions above legal limits that spewed from industrial facilities following Harvey, according to reports from companies filed with the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality.

The EPA and other authorities had warned people affected by the flood that waters could contain bacteria and toxic chemicals, but have said little yet about the specific origins or quantities of substances.

Residents in Baytown, where houses sit along the Houston Ship Channel next to several major refineries and chemical plants, said they were concerned about the impact of the spills and releases on health.

"I'm against the sword and the wall, what can I do?" said Carlos Caban, one of the residents, whose son had taken pictures of contaminated-looking floodwaters in nearby refinery site.

Several residents reported seeing a metallic sheen on water flowing near the plants during the heaviest flooding, posting videos to YouTube.

AG Week

<http://www.agweek.com/news/north-dakota/4324802-epa-thumbs-energy-beet-idea>

EPA: Thumbs-up to 'energy beet' idea

By Mikkel Pates, 9/11/17

The Environmental Protection Agency predicted it might take six months to do an initial evaluation of "energy beets" for their environmental footprint as a feedstock for biofuels.

Six years — not months — later the agency has a thumbs up on energy beets as a feedstock — rating it for greenhouse gases and other environmental issues. Proponents say it's the first of three hurdles in making it accepted as a viable biofuel.

Dave Ripplinger, a North Dakota State University bioenergy specialist, and Maynard Helgaas, an agricultural businessman who has been pushing the idea for eight years, say they're grateful for a positive report, despite the time lag, and look forward to the next phases that could finally create an industry that qualifies for the highest subsidies.

"This is a milestone in the commercialization of energy beets," Ripplinger says of the EPA's recent report.

The EPA decided to change the Renewable Fuels Standard in 2015, which reduced the momentum for advanced biofuel and cellulosic ethanol fuel. Every gallon of biofuel is given a 38-digit "RIN number" which is used to track the use of the fuels. Petroleum fuel marketers must blend biofuel ethanol into their fuel or buy the RINs.

High RIN goals

Standard corn ethanol recently has an 80- to 85-cent per gallon RIN value, while advanced biofuels are around \$1.10 per gallon, says Kyle Althoff, president of Equinox LLC, a biofuels

and agribusiness consultant in Fargo. Cellulosic ethanol is more than \$2 per gallon.

Helgaas, 82, of West Fargo, is president of the Green Vision Group which has been studying the energy beet concept for eight years. The CVG looked at ten communities where a plant might be located and closely studied.

Energy beets produce C5 and C6 ethanol feedstock, which in turn produce aviation fuel and other products, including pharmaceuticals.

Blaine Schatz, the director of the NDSU Carrington Research and Extension Center, has worked with demonstration and testing plots in nine communities around the state, accumulating eight years of plot data. Besides the feedstock, the beets also have benefits for helping to rehabilitate soils that have become unproductive due to salts that have risen during high-water years.

Ripplinger was philosophical about the EPA delays. The agency received more applications than they expected and it took more computer modeling to complete the process, he says. He thinks it's just a coincidence that the energy beet proponents got an unofficial word that the initial process was completed in the first few weeks in the Trump administration.

Although North Dakota was an early proponent, Ripplinger says other energy beet projects across the country may be built first, noting California and Maryland projects have been proposed.

Helgaas says that in Europe 15 percent of the biofuels are from sugar beets, generally with significantly different breeding than for human consumption sugar. Syngenta and Betaseed are two breeding companies who already have developed seed for industrial beet breeding stock.

Delaware News Journal

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/2017/09/11/epa-extends-delaware-pollution-waiver-attempt-lower-gas-prices/652891001/>

EPA extends Delaware pollution waiver in attempt to lower gas prices

By Karl Baker, 9/11/17

Responding to a 40-cent spike in gas prices, regulators on Friday gave Delaware fuel stations further permission to sell stockpiles of winter-blend gasoline.

The move is "to ensure stability of the state's fuel supply in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey's impact on gas production in Texas, where five refineries remain shuttered," said Michael Globetti, spokesman for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, in a statement.

Delaware saw some of the largest upward swings in gas prices nationally after Harvey pummeled the Texas Gulf Coast in August, and limited gasoline production at more than a dozen refineries.

Outages in Texas affect gas stations across the country because more than half of U.S. refinery capacity is located near the Gulf Coast, according to the U.S. Energy Information Agency.

While gasoline futures, which are predictors of upcoming pump prices, have fallen since a spike after Harvey, retail prices in Delaware and nationally have not.

On Monday, a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline sold for \$2.68 in Delaware, up about 23 percent from Aug. 26, just days before Harvey made landfall, according to both AAA and Gasbuddy.com.

DNREC in late August first received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a statewide waiver to allow "regulated parties" to sell winter-blend gasoline through Sept. 15.

"Regulated parties would be the supply chain, from the refineries down to the distributor down to the corner WaWa or Royal Farms service station," Globetti said.

Federal Clean Air Act rules prohibit sale of the blend between May and September in order to minimize ozone pollution.

The gasoline evaporates at lower temperatures than summer varieties, and can be harmful to people with sensitive lungs during sunny days.

Friday's announcement extends the EPA waiver through Sept. 26.

Officials hope pump prices will drop in Delaware as more gallons of gasoline become available for sale.

A spokesman for PBF Energy, owners of the First State's sole refinery in Delaware City, did not immediately respond to a emailed question about the amount of winter blend gasoline the facility has stored.

Hurricane Irma's landfall in Florida over the weekend has not measurably impacted prices outside of state, which is not home to any major oil refinery. In anticipation of shortages in the Sunshine State, Homeland Security officials temporarily allowed foreign-flagged tankers to import gasoline into the area.

On Monday, traders bidding on the gasoline to be sold in October pushed its price down to pre-Harvey levels, indicating that Delaware prices at the pump will eventually follow suit.

Reuters

<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/09/11/reuters-america-update-1-mexico-rescinds-texas-aid-offer-after-huge-quake.html> **Mexico rescinds Texas aid offer after huge quake**

By Reuters Staff, 9/11/17

Mexico has withdrawn its offer to aid victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas due to demands on its emergency services from a massive earthquake that struck late last week, the foreign ministry said in a statement on Monday.

Mexico's government offered to send food, beds, generators, mobile kitchens as well as doctors after torrential rains from Harvey flooded vast parts of Houston.

But the earthquake that struck southern Mexico on Thursday killed at least 96 people and left some 2.5 million people in need of aid. Hurricane Katia also hit the Gulf state of Veracruz this weekend and heavy rains have stretched emergency services.

"Given these circumstance, the Mexican government will channel all available logistical support to serve the families and communities affected in the national territory," the foreign ministry statement said.

U.S.-Mexican relations have been strained by U.S. President Donald Trump's threats to curtail trade with Latin America's No. 2 economy as well as his demand that Mexico pay for a border wall to keep out immigrants and drug traffickers.

The ministry noted that the U.S. embassy had taken nine days to respond to Mexico's formal offer of aid on Aug. 28, and said that "only certain logistical aid" was accepted.

The U.S. embassy in Mexico did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

While government aid never arrived, Mexico's volunteer Red Cross rushed food and supplies to storm refugees.

Mexican media highlighted that Trump had not spoken about the quake, which drew pledges of support from the pope and other world leaders, nor publicly acknowledged Mexico's aid offer.

The foreign ministry thanked Texas Governor Greg Abbott for sending messages of solidarity following the earthquake.

Separately, the ministry said Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray will travel to the United States this week to meet with local leaders and beneficiaries of a U.S. program protecting from deportation immigrants brought illegally into the United States as children.

Last week, Trump said he would end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program but delayed implementation until March to give Congress a chance to draft an alternative.

More than three-fourths of the 800,000 immigrants enrolled in the DACA program are from Mexico.

Videgaray will travel to Sacramento and Los Angeles on Sept. 11-12 and then to Washington on Sept. 13, the ministry said, adding that he will meet with California Governor Jerry Brown and other officials.

Politico

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/11/trump-takes-travel-ban-exemptions-fight-back-to-scotus-242557>

Trump takes travel-ban exemption fight back to SCOTUS

By Josh Gerstein, 9/11/17

The Trump administration is returning to the Supreme Court in an effort to overturn lower court rulings crimping the application of President Donald Trump's travel ban executive order.

Justice Department lawyers asked the high court Monday to allow authorities to keep up a block on many refugees covered by Trump's ban.

However, the administration threw in the towel for now on efforts to insist that grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins of U.S. citizens be covered by the ban despite the Supreme Court ordering an exemption for close family members.

A federal judge in Hawaii ruled against the federal government on both issues in July. Last week, a 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals panel declined to disturb that ruling.

The dispute taken to the justices Monday addresses how much of the travel ban can be enforced until the Supreme Court rules on the broader issues. The justices are scheduled to hear arguments Oct. 10 on a pair of cases related to the ban.

At issue are about 24,000 refugees who have been assigned to U.S. refugee resettlement agencies but not yet given final approval to depart for the U.S.

U.S. District Court Judge Derrick Watson agreed with the State of Hawaii and refugee advocates that the assignment to an American agency was a sufficient connection to a U.S. entity to qualify for the temporary travel-ban reprieve the Supreme Court ordered in June when it agreed to decide the broader legality of the travel ban.

Justice Department lawyers argued against that interpretation, noting that it would fill the pipeline for refugee applicants and essentially nullify the partial stay the high court granted in June in an apparent compromise.

"The Ninth Circuit's decision renders the June 26 stay functionally inoperative," Acting Solicitor General Jeff Wall argued in the filing Monday. "It makes no sense to exempt from....the Order the roughly 24,000 refugees for whom assurances exist, based on the happenstance that they had reached a later stage of the administrative process in which the government routinely obtains assurances."

Justice Anthony Kennedy issued a temporary stay Monday afternoon that essentially freezes the status quo. Without such an action, Watson's order would have kicked in Tuesday, with the administration required to dramatically increase its admission of refugees.

Kennedy ordered Hawaii's attorneys to respond by noon Tuesday and said the temporary stay will remain in place pending further order from him or the full court.

The revised travel ban Trump issued in March suspends issuance of U.S. visas to residents of six majority-Muslim countries for 90 days and halts admission of refugees from across the globe for 120 days.

Those clocks, which began running in late June, may have contributed to the administration's decision to give up on enforcing the travel ban against the broader set of relatives given a reprieve by the lower courts. Due to court rulings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins have been immune from the ban for the past couple of months, so those seeking visas may have been aware of the legal fight and have already gotten them.

And with the six-country visa ban set to run out Sept. 24, few visa applicants would be affected even if the courts narrowed the family exemption.

In the Monday filing, Wall noted that the Supreme Court previously declined a request from the federal government to block the family-related aspect of Watson's order. "In addition, the lower courts' line-drawing error in that regard is less stark than their nullification of both the Order's refugee provisions and this Court's stays permitting implementation of those provisions," he wrote as he explained why the family issue was being dropped.

Thousands of refugees could be impacted if the lower court rulings kick in, although the timing there is also uncertain. Refugee admissions are capped by fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30. Trump could try to block or reduce the admission of refugees after that date by setting that allocation to zero or a low figure.

Obama had set the cap for this year at 110,000, although for budget and capacity reasons a much lower number of refugees were actually expected to be admitted. Trump attempted to lower the cap to 50,000 for this year, but court rulings have effectively blocked that move.

The global refugee halt in Trump's revised executive order runs out in late October, about two weeks after the scheduled oral arguments at the high court. A ruling in the president's favor could empower him to reinstate or extend the travel ban orders or to implement something similar on a permanent basis.

It's also possible that the administration could try to scuttle the legal dispute by declaring the issues moot as a result of the expiration of the key provisions of Trump's orders

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/global-markets-rise-after-quiet-weekend-1505097744>

Dow Climbs Back Above 22000 as Fears Ease

By Marina Force and Corrie Driebush, 9/11/17

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed back above 22000 for the first time in nearly a month, as investors' fears eased about North Korea and Hurricane Irma.

Stocks rose broadly and haven assets retreated, a reversal from last week when major U.S. stock indexes, the dollar and Treasury yields fell as investors worried about worst-case scenarios from summer storms and threats from North Korea.

The Dow industrials rose 266 points, or 1.2%, to 22063 in recent trading. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite jumped 1.1%.

The last time the blue-chip index closed above 22000 was Aug. 16 and it hasn't posted a 1% gain since April.

Some analysts had expected North Korea to conduct a weapons test on Saturday, coinciding with the country's founding day, as it did last year to mark the celebration. The absence of news from Pyongyang supported stocks and the dollar, while weighing on haven assets, analysts say.

Government bond prices declined, pushing up yields. The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note rose to 2.129% in recent trading, according to Tradeweb, compared with Friday's close of 2.058%.

Many analysts don't expect this relative calm to last, however, and bond yields could decrease if North Korea tensions rise once again.

Meanwhile, concerns about Hurricane Irma's impact on the U.S. economy also decreased. A reduction in the storm's strength and a shift in its forecast course—there was no direct hit on Miami—meant insured damage estimates were likely to be less than originally anticipated by some analysts.

Reinsurance companies, which tumbled last week as they were expected to bear the financial brunt of Hurricane Irma's damage, jumped on Monday. Shares of Everest Re Group, which dropped more than 10% last week, rose 4.7% in recent trading. Chubb rose 3.8% and XL Group climbed 5.2%.

The WSJ Dollar Index, which measures the U.S. dollar against a basket of other currencies, rose 0.6%, after sinking to its lowest level in more than two years on Friday. The euro fell 0.6%

against the greenback, paring some of last week's gains, to trade at \$1.1961.

The Stoxx Europe 600 rose 1%, boosted by gains in bank, insurance and technology shares—sectors that tend to gain when investors feel confident enough to take on more risk.

Gold, another traditional haven for money managers, fell 1%. The yen and the Swiss franc, which traditionally rise when markets are volatile, both fell against the U.S. dollar.

A weaker yen boosted Japanese blue-chip stocks. Japan's Nikkei Stock Average rose 1.4%, after setting fresh four-month lows on Friday and logging its worst week in seven months.

South Korea's Kospi added 0.7%, and Australia's S&P/200 rose 0.7%.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 59m
#NeverForget



*"When Americans are in need,
Americans pull together – and
we are one country. And when
we face hardship, we emerge
closer, stronger, and more
determined than ever."*

PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP

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2.6K 6.0K 21K



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 26m
May God Forever Bless the United States of America. #NeverForget911



NEVER FORGET

0:14

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EPA Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17

NTK Network: Exclusive AP Story Relied on EPA Intern and Disgruntled Employee

An Associated Press report regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) effort to secure 54 toxic Superfund sites that are in the path of Hurricane Irma relied on a former EPA intern and an employee who lied about why she left the agency as its sources. The story, which was titled, "AP Exclusive: Toxic sites in likely path of Irma," was written by Michael Bisecker and Jason Dearen, who painted Stephen Sweeney as "a former employee in EPA's office of policy." The Washington Examiner reported, however: "According to federal employment data, Sweeney worked at the EPA for barely more than a year as an "Administration and Office Support Student Trainee." People in less bureaucratic circles call that a paid internship."

E&E News: House to debate EPA regional office closures

The House will weigh blocking any potential plans to cut or close U.S. EPA's regional offices this week as it completes work on a broad, fiscal 2018 spending package. The regional office proposal is one of a handful of remaining amendments to the Interior-EPA section of the appropriations bill, which would also fund the departments of Commerce, State, Justice, Transportation and Agriculture (E&E Daily, Sept. 5). The House is expected to pass the legislation this week, after delaying a vote late last week to focus on a Hurricane Harvey aid package (Greenwire, Sept. 8).

BNA: EPA Chief Pledges to Secure Toxic Sites in Irma's Storm Path

The Trump administration is applying lessons from Hurricane Harvey's drenching of southeast Texas as it secures toxic waste sites in the path of Hurricane Irma, U.S. environmental chief Scott Pruitt said. The Environmental Protection Agency's main goal is to make sure there are "enough people on the ground" to quickly assess the integrity of at-risk chemical sites and respond to needs as the monster storm moves through, Pruitt said. Technical staff already are working to secure about 80 Superfund sites in Irma's path from Miami to North Carolina, including a former pesticide plant, military base, and machine shop. "Operationally, we've tried to make sure we apply the same type of approach we used in Texas," Pruitt, the EPA's administrator, said in a Sept. 7 interview. "Because of the area and the amount of population that's affected in Florida, we're trying to be even more aggressive."

Reuters: US Coast Guard, EPA Cleaning up a Dozen Texas Chemical Spills After Harvey

The U.S. Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency are working with Texas state regulators to clean up oil and chemicals spilled from a dozen industrial facilities after flooding from Hurricane Harvey, authorities said. The spills came from oil refineries, fuel terminals and other businesses, but EPA spokeswoman Terri White said it was not possible to provide an estimate for the amounts spilled. "Initial reports were based on observation," White said. "Some spills were already being cleaned up by the time EPA or other officials arrived to assess them and others had already migrated offsite."

AG Week: EPA: Thumbs-up to 'energy beet' idea

The Environmental Protection Agency predicted it might take six months to do an initial evaluation of "energy beets" for their environmental footprint as a feedstock for biofuels. Six years — not months — later the agency has a thumbs up on energy beets as a feedstock — rating it for greenhouse gases and other environmental issues. Proponents say it's a the first of three hurdles in making it accepted as a viable biofuel. Dave Ripplinger, a North Dakota State University bioenergy specialist, and Maynard Helgaas, an agricultural businessman who has been pushing the idea for eight years, say they're grateful for a positive report, despite the time lag, and look forward to the next phases that could finally create an industry that qualifies for the highest subsidies.

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Responding to a 40-cent spike in gas prices, regulators on Friday gave Delaware fuel stations further permission to sell stockpiles of winter-blend gasoline. The move is "to ensure stability of the state's fuel supply in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey's impact on gas production in Texas, where five refineries remain shuttered," said Michael Globetti, spokesman for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, in a statement. Delaware

saw some of the largest upward swings in gas prices nationally after Harvey pummeled the Texas Gulf Coast in August, and limited gasoline production at more than a dozen refineries.

National Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17

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Politico: Trump takes travel-ban exemption fight back to SCOTUS

The Trump administration is returning to the Supreme Court in an effort to overturn lower court rulings crimping the application of President Donald Trump's travel ban executive order. Justice Department lawyers asked the high court Monday to allow authorities to keep up a block on many refugees covered by Trump's ban. However, the administration threw in the towel for now on efforts to insist that grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins of U.S. citizens be covered by the ban despite the Supreme Court ordering an exemption for close family members.

The Wall Street Journal: Dow Climbs Back Above 22000 as Fears Ease

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed back above 22000 for the first time in nearly a month, as investors' fears eased about North Korea and Hurricane Irma. Stocks rose broadly and haven assets retreated, a reversal from last week when major U.S. stock indexes, the dollar and Treasury yields fell as investors worried about worst-case scenarios from summer storms and threats from North Korea. The Dow industrials rose 266 points, or 1.2%, to 22063 in recent trading. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite jumped 1.1%.

TRUMP TWEETS

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/exclusive-ap-story-relied-on-epa-intern-and-disgruntled-employee/>

Exclusive AP Story Relied on EPA Intern and Disgruntled Employee

By: No author listed, 9/11/17, 2:03 p.m.

An Associated Press report regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) effort to secure 54 toxic Superfund sites that are in the path of Hurricane Irma relied on a former EPA intern and an employee who lied about why she left the agency as its sources.

The story, which was titled, "AP Exclusive: Toxic sites in likely path of Irma," was written by Michael Bisecker and Jason Dearen, who painted Stephen Sweeney as "a former employee in EPA's office of policy."

The Washington Examiner reported, however: "According to federal employment data, Sweeney worked at the EPA for barely more than a year as an "Administration and Office Support Student Trainee." People in less bureaucratic circles call that a paid internship."

The second source that the AP reporters used, Elizabeth Southerland, was formerly the director of science and technology in EPA's Office of Water. Southerland told the AP that EPA should do more "to quickly respond with careful monitoring after the storm."

The Washington Examiner also reported on why the AP citing Southerland was problematic:

"Like the intern, there's reason to doubt Southerland. After more than 30 years at the EPA, she reportedly quit in protest of budget cuts and Pruitt's leadership. But the decision had more to do with retirement than political protest. A Washington Free Beacon report found that Southerland was eligible for a pension."

"None of any of this disqualifies Southerland or Sweeney per se. They might well know some science things. But it's unsettling for a multinational news agency that's reprinted as journalism's gold standard. The AP should be able to find better sources than a biased analyst and an intern."

It appears that the AP's editorial standards are a little lax when it comes to publishing a piece that attacks the Trump administration.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060060215>

House to debate EPA regional office closures

By George Cahlink, 9/11/17

The House will weigh blocking any potential plans to cut or close U.S. EPA's regional offices this week as it completes work on a broad, fiscal 2018 spending package.

The regional office proposal is one of a handful of remaining amendments to the Interior-EPA section of the appropriations bill, which would also fund the departments of Commerce, State, Justice, Transportation and Agriculture (E&E Daily, Sept. 5).

The House is expected to pass the legislation this week, after delaying a vote late last week to focus on a Hurricane Harvey aid package (Greenwire, Sept. 8).

The EPA office amendment, offered by Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.), comes in response to speculation the agency could shutter some of its 10 regional branches.

Lawmakers' worries spiked earlier this year when an internal EPA budget hinted at closing some of the offices, but Administrator Scott Pruitt said no discussions are actually happening. This week will be the House's first chance to vote on the issue.

Polis acknowledged Pruitt's assurances last week but said his plan would make it much harder. The congressman noted EPA regional offices are at the forefront of disaster responses, like Harvey in Texas, and also address the "very real threat of climate change."

Other amendments

The House this week will also consider a proposal from Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.) to prohibit spending for enforcing an Obama administration EPA rule related to methane emissions. The Trump administration already has sought to block the rule, but that plan has run into resistance from the courts.

Mullin said on the floor last week that the methane rule is a "job-killing regulation" that will cost the economy \$530 million annually by limiting oil and gas operations.

Most Democrats are certain to oppose the amendment, seeing the rule as part of a broader push to cap emissions that cause climate change.

Mullin and Rep. Scott Perry (R-Pa.) will also push an amendment that would prohibit funds from being used to measure the social cost of carbon. Mullin noted the House already has backed similar provisions 11 times in recent years.

Rep. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.) will get a vote on a proposal that would cut EPA funding by \$1.9 billion to \$5.6 billion, which he said would match the administration's request for the agency for fiscal 2018.

But the amendment may face bipartisan opposition as lawmakers have already resisted other proposals to make steep cuts to EPA funding in the bill.

Once the package is completed, the House will have finished all 12 fiscal 2018 spending bills, although the Senate has yet to pass any.

As a result, the recently approved Harvey aid measure extended current fiscal 2017 spending about three months beyond the start of the new fiscal year to Dec. 8 to buy members time to hammer out a final spending accord.

BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=120234427&item=408&prod=deln&cat=AGENCY

EPA Chief Pledges to Secure Toxic Sites in Irma's Storm Path

By Jennifer A. Dlouhy, 9/11/17

The Trump administration is applying lessons from Hurricane Harvey's drenching of southeast Texas as it secures toxic waste sites in the path of Hurricane Irma, U.S. environmental chief Scott Pruitt said.

The Environmental Protection Agency's main goal is to make sure there are "enough people on the ground" to quickly assess the integrity of at-risk chemical sites and respond to needs as the monster storm moves through, Pruitt said. Technical staff already are working to secure about 80 Superfund sites in Irma's path from Miami to North Carolina, including a former pesticide plant, military base, and machine shop.

"Operationally, we've tried to make sure we apply the same type of approach we used in Texas," Pruitt, the EPA's administrator, said in a Sept. 7 interview. "Because of the area and the amount of population that's affected in Florida, we're trying to be even more aggressive."

The EPA faced some criticism for its response to Hurricane Harvey in Texas, as it was not able to immediately inspect some toxic Superfund sites that were flooded or inaccessible. After chemicals at one plant exploded, spewing fumes into the air, the agency said an initial analysis showed "no high levels of toxic chemicals." Earlier on Sept. 7, local police officers filed a lawsuit against the plant owners, Arkema SA, saying they were sickened by the fumes from the plant.

Nearly 200 EPA personnel were deployed in Texas. The agency has about 77 people working on Irma related efforts and another seven are on the way.

Back-to-back hurricanes hitting the U.S. threaten to strain the federal government's resources, prompting the Senate to pass a \$15.25 billion relief bill Sept. 7, and renewing a debate about the size and scope of federal agencies.

The Trump administration has proposed cutting nearly a third of the EPA's budget for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1 and culling roughly 3,200 employees from the agency's 15,000-member workforce, a process that has already begun as hundreds of workers accept buyouts.

Pruitt stressed that the EPA has not been hit by budget reductions yet, as Congress weighs how much to spend on the agency. Both Republican and Democratic lawmakers have signaled that they will refuse to make the steep budget cuts President Donald Trump is seeking for EPA.

"Congress is working through the budget as we speak, so there's been no impact in that regard," Pruitt said. "It's more

of just simply allocating personnel and prioritizing personnel—making sure that at the end of the day it's the local officials and the state officials in partnership with the EPA.”

Reuters

<https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2017-09-11/us-coast-guard-epa-cleaning-up-a-dozen-texas-chemical-spills-after-harvey>

US Coast Guard, EPA Cleaning up a Dozen Texas Chemical Spills After Harvey

By Emily Flitter, 9/11/17

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The spills came from oil refineries, fuel terminals and other businesses, but EPA spokeswoman Terri White said it was not possible to provide an estimate for the amounts spilled.

"Initial reports were based on observation," White said. "Some spills were already being cleaned up by the time EPA or other officials arrived to assess them and others had already migrated offsite."

Refineries owned by Valero Energy Corp in Houston, Motiva Inc in Port Arthur, and Exxon Mobile Corp in Baytown, were among the facilities that had reported spills, according to White. Representatives for those companies did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Officials also reported spills at Kinder Morgan Inc's Pasadena fuel storage terminal and at an oil terminal in Texas City owned by NuStar Energy LP.

Kinder Morgan spokeswoman Lexey Long said on Monday the company reported a spill of 500 barrels of gasoline on Aug. 27. Workers covered the spill with a foam blanket and set up a barrier to keep the public away.

"The spill has been fully remediated," she said.

NuStar representatives had no immediate comment.

Two wastewater treatment plants - Integrity Golden Triangle Marine Services of Port Arthur and San Jacinto River and Rail in Beaumont - also appeared on the list of spill response locations that EPA provided to Reuters.

San Jacinto River and Rail said it spilled a "foamy emulsion" when floodwaters overtopped the berms around its facility.

"Some is on our property and some is on adjacent property which has already been cleaned up," said spokesman Dennis Winkler. "We do not expect a long-term environmental impact. We do not expect there will be any air impact or health impacts."

Representatives from Integrity Golden Triangle did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The liquid spills come in addition to more than a million pounds of toxic emissions above legal limits that spewed from industrial facilities following Harvey, according to reports from companies filed with the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality.

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<http://www.agweek.com/news/north-dakota/4324802-epa-thumbs-energy-beet-idea>

EPA: Thumbs-up to 'energy beet' idea

By Mikkel Pates, 9/11/17

The Environmental Protection Agency predicted it might take six months to do an initial evaluation of "energy beets" for their environmental footprint as a feedstock for biofuels.

Six years — not months — later the agency has a thumbs up on energy beets as a feedstock — rating it for greenhouse gases and other environmental issues. Proponents say it's the first of three hurdles in making it accepted as a viable biofuel.

Dave Ripplinger, a North Dakota State University bioenergy specialist, and Maynard Helgaas, an agricultural businessman who has been pushing the idea for eight years, say they're grateful for a positive report, despite the time lag, and look forward to the next phases that could finally create an industry that qualifies for the highest subsidies.

"This is a milestone in the commercialization of energy beets," Ripplinger says of the EPA's recent report.

The EPA decided to change the Renewable Fuels Standard in 2015, which reduced the momentum for advanced biofuel and cellulosic ethanol fuel. Every gallon of biofuel is given a 38-digit "RIN number" which is used to track the use of the fuels. Petroleum fuel marketers must blend biofuel ethanol into their fuel or buy the RINs.

High RIN goals

Standard corn ethanol recently has an 80- to 85-cent per gallon RIN value, while advanced biofuels are around \$1.10 per gallon, says Kyle Althoff, president of Equinox LLC, a biofuels and agribusiness consultant in Fargo. Cellulosic ethanol is more than \$2 per gallon.

Helgaas, 82, of West Fargo, is president of the Green Vision Group which has been studying the energy beet concept for eight years. The CVG looked at ten communities where a plant might be located and closely studied.

Energy beets produce C5 and C6 ethanol feedstock, which in turn produce aviation fuel and other products, including pharmaceuticals.

Blaine Schatz, the director of the NDSU Carrington Research and Extension Center, has worked with demonstration and testing plots in nine communities around the state, accumulating eight years of plot data. Besides the feedstock, the beets also have benefits for helping to rehabilitate soils that have become unproductive due to salts that have risen during high-water years.

Ripplinger was philosophical about the EPA delays. The agency received more applications than they expected and it took more computer modeling to complete the process, he says. He thinks it's just a coincidence that the energy beet

proponents got an unofficial word that the initial process was completed in the first few weeks in the Trump administration.

Although North Dakota was an early proponent, Ripplinger says other energy beet projects across the country may be built first, noting California and Maryland projects have been proposed.

Helgaas says that in Europe 15 percent of the biofuels are from sugar beets, generally with significantly different breeding than for human consumption sugar. Syngenta and Betaseed are two breeding companies who already have developed seed for industrial beet breeding stock.

Delaware News Journal

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/2017/09/11/epa-extends-delaware-pollution-waiver-attempt-lower-gas-prices/652891001/>

EPA extends Delaware pollution waiver in attempt to lower gas prices

By Karl Baker, 9/11/17

Responding to a 40-cent spike in gas prices, regulators on Friday gave Delaware fuel stations further permission to sell stockpiles of winter-blend gasoline.

The move is "to ensure stability of the state's fuel supply in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey's impact on gas production in Texas, where five refineries remain shuttered," said Michael Globetti, spokesman for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, in a statement.

Delaware saw some of the largest upward swings in gas prices nationally after Harvey pummeled the Texas Gulf Coast in August, and limited gasoline production at more than a dozen refineries.

Outages in Texas affect gas stations across the country because more than half of U.S. refinery capacity is located near the Gulf Coast, according to the U.S. Energy Information Agency.

While gasoline futures, which are predictors of upcoming pump prices, have fallen since a spike after Harvey, retail prices in Delaware and nationally have not.

On Monday, a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline sold for \$2.68 in Delaware, up about 23 percent from Aug. 26, just days before Harvey made landfall, according to both AAA and Gasbuddy.com.

DNREC in late August first received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a statewide waiver to allow "regulated parties" to sell winter-blend gasoline through Sept. 15.

"Regulated parties would be the supply chain, from the refineries down to the distributor down to the corner WaWa or Royal Farms service station," Globetti said.

Federal Clean Air Act rules prohibit sale of the blend between May and September in order to minimize ozone pollution.

The gasoline evaporates at lower temperatures than summer varieties, and can be harmful to people with sensitive lungs during sunny days.

Friday's announcement extends the EPA waiver through Sept. 26.

Officials hope pump prices will drop in Delaware as more gallons of gasoline become available for sale.

A spokesman for PBF Energy, owners of the First State's sole refinery in Delaware City, did not immediately respond to a

emailed question about the amount of winter blend gasoline the facility has stored.

Hurricane Irma's landfall in Florida over the weekend has not measurably impacted prices outside of state, which is not home to any major oil refinery. In anticipation of shortages in the Sunshine State, Homeland Security officials temporarily allowed foreign-flagged tankers to import gasoline into the area.

On Monday, traders bidding on the gasoline to be sold in October pushed its price down to pre-Harvey levels, indicating that Delaware prices at the pump will eventually follow suit.

Reuters

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/09/11/reuters-america-update-1-mexico-rescinds-texas-aid-offer-after-huge-quake.html>

Mexico rescinds Texas aid offer after huge quake

By Reuters Staff, 9/11/17

Mexico has withdrawn its offer to aid victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas due to demands on its emergency services from a massive earthquake that struck late last week, the foreign ministry said in a statement on Monday.

Mexico's government offered to send food, beds, generators, mobile kitchens as well as doctors after torrential rains from Harvey flooded vast parts of Houston.

But the earthquake that struck southern Mexico on Thursday killed at least 96 people and left some 2.5 million people in need of aid. Hurricane Katia also hit the Gulf state of Veracruz this weekend and heavy rains have stretched emergency services.

"Given these circumstance, the Mexican government will channel all available logistical support to serve the families and communities affected in the national territory," the foreign ministry statement said.

U.S.-Mexican relations have been strained by U.S. President Donald Trump's threats to curtail trade with Latin America's No. 2 economy as well as his demand that Mexico pay for a border wall to keep out immigrants and drug traffickers.

The ministry noted that the U.S. embassy had taken nine days to respond to Mexico's formal offer of aid on Aug. 28, and said that "only certain logistical aid" was accepted.

The U.S. embassy in Mexico did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

While government aid never arrived, Mexico's volunteer Red Cross rushed food and supplies to storm refugees.

Mexican media highlighted that Trump had not spoken about the quake, which drew pledges of support from the pope and other world leaders, nor publicly acknowledged Mexico's aid offer.

The foreign ministry thanked Texas Governor Greg Abbott for sending messages of solidarity following the earthquake.

Separately, the ministry said Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray will travel to the United States this week to meet with local leaders and beneficiaries of a U.S. program protecting from deportation immigrants brought illegally into the United States as children.

Last week, Trump said he would end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program but delayed implementation until March to give Congress a chance to draft an alternative.

More than three-fourths of the 800,000 immigrants enrolled in the DACA program are from Mexico.

Videgaray will travel to Sacramento and Los Angeles on Sept. 11-12 and then to Washington on Sept. 13, the ministry said, adding that he will meet with California Governor Jerry Brown and other officials.

Politico

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/11/trump-takes-travel-ban-exemptions-fight-back-to-scotus-242557>

Trump takes travel-ban exemption fight back to SCOTUS

By Josh Gerstein, 9/11/17

The Trump administration is returning to the Supreme Court in an effort to overturn lower court rulings crimping the application of President Donald Trump's travel ban executive order.

Justice Department lawyers asked the high court Monday to allow authorities to keep up a block on many refugees covered by Trump's ban.

However, the administration threw in the towel for now on efforts to insist that grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins of U.S. citizens be covered by the ban despite the Supreme Court ordering an exemption for close family members.

A federal judge in Hawaii ruled against the federal government on both issues in July. Last week, a 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals panel declined to disturb that ruling.

The dispute taken to the justices Monday addresses how much of the travel ban can be enforced until the Supreme Court rules on the broader issues. The justices are scheduled to hear arguments Oct. 10 on a pair of cases related to the ban.

At issue are about 24,000 refugees who have been assigned to U.S. refugee resettlement agencies but not yet given final approval to depart for the U.S.

U.S. District Court Judge Derrick Watson agreed with the State of Hawaii and refugee advocates that the assignment to an American agency was a sufficient connection to a U.S. entity to qualify for the temporary travel-ban reprieve the Supreme Court ordered in June when it agreed to decide the broader legality of the travel ban.

Justice Department lawyers argued against that interpretation, noting that it would fill the pipeline for refugee applicants and essentially nullify the partial stay the high court granted in June in an apparent compromise.

"The Ninth Circuit's decision renders the June 26 stay functionally inoperative," Acting Solicitor General Jeff Wall argued in the filing Monday. "It makes no sense to exempt from....the Order the roughly 24,000 refugees for whom assurances exist, based on the happenstance that they had reached a later stage of the administrative process in which the government routinely obtains assurances."

Justice Anthony Kennedy issued a temporary stay Monday afternoon that essentially freezes the status quo. Without such an action, Watson's order would have kicked in Tuesday, with the administration required to dramatically increase its admission of refugees.

Kennedy ordered Hawaii's attorneys to respond by noon Tuesday and said the temporary stay will remain in place pending further order from him or the full court.

The revised travel ban Trump issued in March suspends issuance of U.S. visas to residents of six majority-Muslim countries for 90 days and halts admission of refugees from across the globe for 120 days.

Those clocks, which began running in late June, may have contributed to the administration's decision to give up on enforcing the travel ban against the broader set of relatives given a reprieve by the lower courts. Due to court rulings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins have been immune from the ban for the past couple of months, so those seeking visas may have been aware of the legal fight and have already gotten them.

And with the six-country visa ban set to run out Sept. 24, few visa applicants would be affected even if the courts narrowed the family exemption.

In the Monday filing, Wall noted that the Supreme Court previously declined a request from the federal government to block the family-related aspect of Watson's order. "In addition, the lower courts' line-drawing error in that regard is less stark than their nullification of both the Order's refugee provisions and this Court's stays permitting implementation of those provisions," he wrote as he explained why the family issue was being dropped.

Thousands of refugees could be impacted if the lower court rulings kick in, although the timing there is also uncertain. Refugee admissions are capped by fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30. Trump could try to block or reduce the admission of refugees after that date by setting that allocation to zero or a low figure.

Obama had set the cap for this year at 110,000, although for budget and capacity reasons a much lower number of refugees were actually expected to be admitted. Trump attempted to lower the cap to 50,000 for this year, but court rulings have effectively blocked that move.

The global refugee halt in Trump's revised executive order runs out in late October, about two weeks after the scheduled oral arguments at the high court. A ruling in the president's favor could empower him to reinstate or extend the travel ban orders or to implement something similar on a permanent basis.

It's also possible that the administration could try to scuttle the legal dispute by declaring the issues moot as a result of the expiration of the key provisions of Trump's orders

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/global-markets-rise-after-quiet-weekend-1505097744>

Dow Climbs Back Above 22000 as Fears Ease

By Marina Force and Corrie Driebush, 9/11/17

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed back above 22000 for the first time in nearly a month, as investors' fears eased about North Korea and Hurricane Irma.

Stocks rose broadly and haven assets retreated, a reversal from last week when major U.S. stock indexes, the dollar and Treasury yields fell as investors worried about worst-case scenarios from summer storms and threats from North Korea.

The Dow industrials rose 266 points, or 1.2%, to 22063 in recent trading. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite jumped 1.1%.

The last time the blue-chip index closed above 22000 was Aug. 16 and it hasn't posted a 1% gain since April.

Some analysts had expected North Korea to conduct a weapons test on Saturday, coinciding with the country's founding day, as it did last year to mark the celebration. The absence of news from Pyongyang supported stocks and the dollar, while weighing on haven assets, analysts say.

Government bond prices declined, pushing up yields. The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note rose to 2.129% in

recent trading, according to Tradeweb, compared with Friday's close of 2.058%.

Many analysts don't expect this relative calm to last, however, and bond yields could decrease if North Korea tensions rise once again.

Meanwhile, concerns about Hurricane Irma's impact on the U.S. economy also decreased. A reduction in the storm's strength and a shift in its forecast course—there was no direct hit on Miami—meant insured damage estimates were likely to be less than originally anticipated by some analysts.

Reinsurance companies, which tumbled last week as they were expected to bear the financial brunt of Hurricane Irma's damage, jumped on Monday. Shares of Everest Re Group, which dropped more than 10% last week, rose 4.7% in recent trading. Chubb rose 3.8% and XL Group climbed 5.2%.

The WSJ Dollar Index, which measures the U.S. dollar against a basket of other currencies, rose 0.6%, after sinking to its lowest level in more than two years on Friday. The euro fell 0.6% against the greenback, paring some of last week's gains, to trade at \$1.1961.

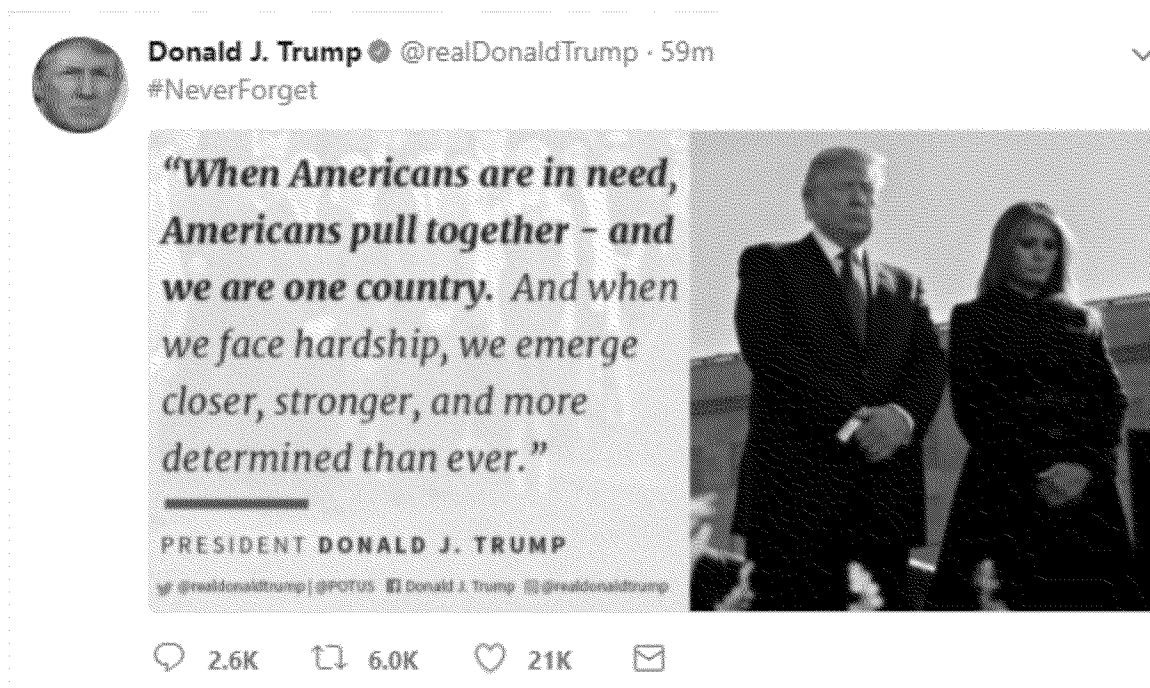
The Stoxx Europe 600 rose 1%, boosted by gains in bank, insurance and technology shares—sectors that tend to gain when investors feel confident enough to take on more risk.

Gold, another traditional haven for money managers, fell 1%. The yen and the Swiss franc, which traditionally rise when markets are volatile, both fell against the U.S. dollar.

A weaker yen boosted Japanese blue-chip stocks. Japan's Nikkei Stock Average rose 1.4%, after setting fresh four-month lows on Friday and logging its worst week in seven months.

South Korea's Kospi added 0.7%, and Australia's S&P/200 rose 0.7%.

TRUMP TWEETS

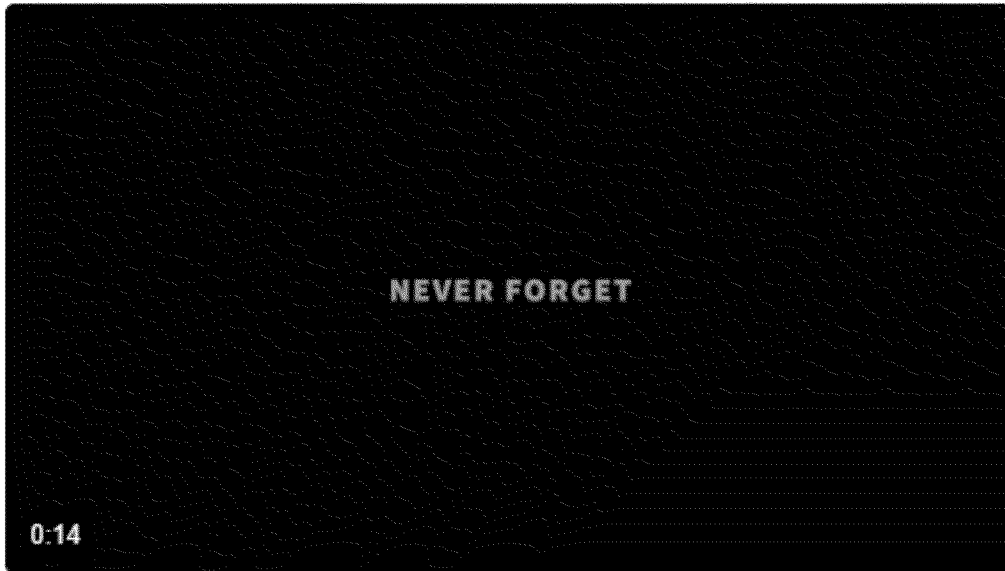




Donald J. Trump  @realDonaldTrump · 26m



May God Forever Bless the United States of America. #NeverForget911



 2.2K  5.3K  17K 

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Tue 7/18/2017 11:57:12 AM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle: SENATE HEALTH CARE BILL COLLAPSES – McConnell eyes 'repeal only' vote – HOUSE GOP UNVEILS BUDGET – Grassley triumphs in push-up contest

By Heather Caygle | 07/18/2017 07:55 AM EDT

With an assist from Jen Scholtes

GOP LEADERS EYE 'REPEAL ONLY' VOTE - Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced late Monday night he will push the chamber to vote to repeal Obamacare without an immediate replacement after the GOP's health care plan imploded earlier in the evening. Sens. Mike Lee and Jerry Moran surprised everyone - including President Donald Trump - by jointly announcing their opposition to even beginning debate on the GOP plan. With Sens. Rand Paul and Susan Collins already on the record against taking up the bill, the opposition from Lee and Moran tanked the GOP's replacement proposal.

What's next: It's not as simple as having senators vote up-or-down to repeal Obamacare. Republicans would first need 50 votes to take up the House-passed Obamacare replacement - meaning there could be no more defections, Sen. John McCain would likely need to be back and at least two of the four publicly opposed senators would have to change their positions. If that happens - and that's a big *if* - McConnell then would call up an amendment to eliminate major parts of Obamacare, similar to the GOP-passed bill vetoed by President Barack Obama in 2015.

The Obamacare repeal received widespread GOP support in 2015, when there were no real consequences. But now, "GOP lawmakers have voiced severe doubts that such a plan can win the 50 votes necessary this year given the uncertainty it would throw onto insurance markets," Burgess and Jen Haberkorn report. Even before the Lee-Moran defections, Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) was fuming about the process Monday, accusing McConnell of a "breach of trust" in the way he sold Medicaid changes to moderates. Much more: <http://politi.co/2u5bgSb>

Reality check, via Politico Pulse's Dan Diamond: A straight Obamacare repeal could lead to 32 million fewer insured, based on **CBO's estimate of Republicans' 2015 repeal legislation. More.**

After the Moran-Lee announcement: Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Bill Cassidy (R-La.) were on twitter pushing their alternative health care plan.

And Sen. John McCain, still recovering from surgery, issued a statement calling for a bipartisan approach. "The Congress must now return to regular order, hold hearings, receive input from members of both parties, and heed the recommendations of our nation's governors," the Arizona Republican said in a statement.

Trump, meanwhile, was blindsided by the announcement from Lee (Utah) and Moran (Kansas), which happened as the president was having dinner and

huddling with other GOP senators in a health care strategy session. During the dinner, Trump said Republicans would look like "dopes" if they couldn't get it together on health care, Tara Palmeri scooped. Here's Josh Dawsey with more from the White House: <http://politi.co/2u5dHUN>

DRUMROLL PLEASE... House Budget Chairwoman Diane Black (R-Tenn.) is rolling out the GOP's fiscal 2018 budget proposal this morning, the first step to launching a major tax code rewrite later this year. You can view the plan (which went live at 6 a.m.) here: <http://bit.ly/2u3JzZU>. But, as Sarah Ferris explains, there's a catch: "To unlock Congress' power to expedite tax overhaul this year, GOP lawmakers would need to slash billions from politically sensitive programs like food stamps, student aid and federal pension funds."

Budget faces uncertain fate: The proposal is expected to survive a committee markup this week but its chances on the floor are unclear. Centrist Republicans are balking at the \$200 billion in mandatory cuts, threatening to withhold their support. And House Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) told reporters Monday the mandatory cuts aren't steep enough to garner conservatives' backing. Sarah with more: <http://politi.co/2u5esNF>

WELCOME TO JULY 18, WHERE WE CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S ONLY TUESDAY. Thanks for reading POLITICO's Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill.

MONDAY'S MOST CLICKED: Rep. Todd Rokita's [comments](#) about likely Senate GOP rival Rep. Luke Messer and [the story](#) about West Virginia Rep. Alex Mooney hiring a sitting Maryland state senator to run his office tied for most clicks yesterday.

CLUELESSNESS HURTS PARTISAN OMNIBUS IDEA - House leaders could make a decision as early as today on whether to forge ahead or give up on the dream of passing a partisan spending package before August recess. The GOP launched a whipping operation Monday night to see if enough Republicans will get on board to pass a 12-bill spending bundle without Democratic votes.

Their biggest impediment? Most lawmakers are still altogether clueless about what's in the 12 individual funding bills, and the House Appropriations Committee hasn't yet approved them all. "You've got to see the product first, and right now it's still in the works," Rep. Charlie Dent (R-Pa.), an appropriations cardinal, told POLITICO after GOP leaders worked to get 218 Republicans committed during Monday night votes.

GOP EYES WRAY CONFIRMATION BEFORE RECESS - Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell hopes to leave for August recess with at least one thing accomplished: Christopher Wray confirmed as FBI director. Wray sailed through his confirmation hearing last week and has already picked up support from some Democrats for what is typically a position that receives strong bipartisan backing. The Senate Judiciary Committee will vote on Wray's nomination Thursday. Seung Min: <http://politi.co/2u34T1q>

THE DEBT CEILING DIVIDE - Republican leaders in both chambers still haven't decided on a debt ceiling strategy, Rachael and Burgess report. With the Senate's health care push fading quickly, GOP leaders are eyeing a debt ceiling increase before the August recess, possibly attaching it to a must-pass veterans bill. But the House has other plans, with leaders preferring to increase the debt limit much closer to the drop-dead deadline to do so, which the CBO estimates will come sometime in October. "The reality is that striking a debt agreement will likely take much longer than two weeks," they report. More: <http://politi.co/2u3t6EP>

ISIS BRIEFINGS THIS WEEK - Defense Secretary James Mattis and Gen. Joe Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will be on Capitol Hill tomorrow for an all-senators briefing on the fight against ISIS starting at 3 p.m., [Connor O'Brien reports](#). They will be back to brief the House on Thursday.

THREATENING NOTE LEFT AT HELLER'S OFFICE - We now know that Sen. Dean Heller's Las Vegas office wasn't actually burglarized over the weekend, as initially reported. Instead, someone left a threatening note "asserting that he would lose his health care if the key senator voted for the repeal bill and that he would die if that happened and would take Heller with him, a law enforcement source said," Jon Ralston reports for the Nevada Independent. More: <http://bit.ly/2u2GSrt>

GRASSLEY'S STILL GOT IT - At nearly 84 years old, Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) is still an avid runner, sometimes jogging around the Capitol as early as 4 a.m. But that's not all the Senate Judiciary chairman does to keep up his fitness routine, as evidenced by a push-up contest Monday against Bloomberg's Kevin Cirilli. Watch the video: <http://bit.ly/2u29YqJ>

GLOVES OFF IN HOOSIER STATE SHOWDOWN - Neither Rep. Todd Rokita nor Luke Messer have officially declared they're running for Senate

next year but you'd have no idea based on the way the two continue to duke it out publicly. Messer sent a lengthy email to supporters Monday titled "I'm tired of Todd Rokita lying about my family," the latest salvo in a shadow war as both lawmakers prepare to take on Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly. The Hill's Ben Kamisar with more: <http://bit.ly/2u331pA>

POLICE INVESTIGATING AFTER DRIVER STRIKES BARRIER - Capitol Hill was on alert Monday after a driver struck a campus barricade and police vehicle. "After nearly four hours, U.S. Capitol Police said there is 'no evidence to indicate any nexus to terrorism at this time' but a suspect faces several charges," ABC News reports. "U.S. Capitol Police closed off several streets and detonated two controlled explosions to investigate whether the vehicle contained dangerous materials. At 3:30 p.m., police announced the vehicle was cleared 'with negative results.'" John Parkinson and Dakshayani Shankar: <http://abcn.ws/2u30mfv>

ARRIVAL LOUNGE - Ricki Eshman is being promoted to press secretary for Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.). She was previously deputy press secretary and also worked in then-Gov. Hassan's press office. Ricki replaces Meira Bernstein, whose last day was Friday.

TODAY IN CONGRESS - The Senate meets at 10 a.m. with a confirmation vote of Defense Deputy Secretary nominee Patrick Shanahan at 12:15 p.m. The Senate will then recess for weekly caucus lunches until 2:15 p.m. The House meets at 10 a.m. with first votes at 2 p.m. and last votes at 5 p.m. Today's agenda: <http://bit.ly/2u56AeS>.

AROUND THE HILL - Sens. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) and Cory Booker (D-N.J.) and Reps. Mia Love (R-Utah), Doug Collins (R-Ga.) and Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) participate in a forum on reforming the female prison system from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Newseum. Speaking schedule here: <http://bit.ly/2u2Cwk1>

Sens. Tom Udall (D-N.M.), Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.), Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), Al Franken (D-Minn.) and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) lead a roundtable on the potential impact of the GOP's health care bill on Tribal communities at 9:30 a.m. in 628 Dirksen.

Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), GOP Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) and Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.) hold a post-conference presser in the RNC lobby at 10 a.m. **House Budget Committee Chairwoman Diane Black (R-Tenn.)** holds a press conference on the GOP's fiscal 2018 budget

proposal at 10:30 a.m. in HVC Studio A.

House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) holds his weekly pen and pad at 11 a.m. in H-144. **Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.)** holds a press conference on agricultural workers and immigration at 11:30 a.m. in the House triangle.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Rep. John Sarbanes (D-Md.) and other House Democrats hold a press conference to unveil a "comprehensive package of democracy reforms" at 12 p.m. in HVC Studio A.

Pelosi and Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-N.Y.) take part in a panel discussion on the Puerto Rican economy at 2 p.m. in 2360 Rayburn. **House Budget ranking member John Yarmuth (D-Ky.)** holds a pen and pad on the GOP's 2018 budget proposal at 2:15 in Pelosi's conference room, near the Rayburn room.

House Judiciary ranking member John Conyers (D-Mich.), CBC Chairman Cedric Richmond (D-La.) and other Judiciary Democrats and members of the CBC hold a voting rights forum at 3 p.m. in 2247 Rayburn.

Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) will give opening remarks at a Faith & Politics Institute forum on the opioid epidemic starting at 7 p.m. in CVC 217. **Rep. Hal Rogers (R-Ky.)** will then participate in a discussion with journalist Sam Quinones, who recently wrote a book on the crisis.

MONDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER - Naomi Charalambakis correctly guessed that Sen. John McCain would hold his breath in anger as a young child, to the point of passing out. His parents would dunk him in an ice bath to try and stop him.

TODAY'S TRIVIA - Naomi with today's question: While in law school, this former president typically ate a very specific type of candy bar for breakfast. Name the president, the school he attended and his breakfast candy of choice. The first person to correctly answer gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send answers my way: hcaygle@politico.com

GET HUDDLE [emailed to your phone](#) each morning.

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/huddle/2017/07/18/politico-huddle-senate-health-care-bill-collapses-mcconnell-eyes-repeal-only-vote-house-gop-unveils-budget-grassley-triumphs-in-push-up-contest-221380>

To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings>

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Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Joe Pounder[jpounder@definercorp.com]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thur 9/28/2017 10:29:42 PM
Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

Great / will let contracts know. Thx

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 28, 2017, at 6:27 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Great. Adding Nancy and Liz.

On Sep 28, 2017, at 4:11 PM, Joe Pounder <jpounder@definercorp.com> wrote:

We're fully registered...
<Screen Shot 2017-09-28 at 4.23.59 PM.png>

On Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 3:29 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy
<Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

HI –

Working with contracts on this – here is the remaining issue that the contracting officer brought to me yesterday --

Specifically, the vendor is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). In order for any vendor to receive a contract from the federal government, they must be registered in this system. The vendor seems to be reluctant to register.

George had been working with the vendor on this. I have a call into the vendor as they may need assistance in completing the forms.

Will update you as soon as I hear from the vendor.

Thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:02 PM

To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>

Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Definers -- Clips

Importance: High

Where are we on this and when can we get this going? Today is a day where we could really use their help capturing clips in real time. This is very important and our wait and the process to do this has been way too long. Thank you!

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

--

Joe Pounder
jpounder@definercorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Mon 10/30/2017 7:27:50 PM
Subject: Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders, 10/30/2017, #28

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 30, 2017

PRESS BRIEFING

BY PRESS SECRETARY SARAH SANDERS

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

1:33 P.M. EDT

MS. SANDERS: Good afternoon. I'd like to start the briefing today by addressing a topic that I know all of you are preparing to ask me about, and that's tax reform. (Laughter.) A couple of you got it.

The initial House tax reform bill will be introduced on Wednesday by the Ways & Means Committee. This is the product of months of work and is now going through an open process in the House.

The committee plans to mark up the bill next week, starting on Monday. The House is likely to consider the bill week of November 13th. In order to stay on pace, we want to see a House bill passed by Thanksgiving. This is a very aggressive timeline, but one that will help us get tax cuts this year so families and businesses can plan for 2018.

We look forward to the details of the tax bill being released on Wednesday, but today I want to take a step back and explain what we're working to do using an anecdote we can all understand.

This story has been floating around the Internet for a while, and it's important to keep in mind that the numbers are not exact, and I'm also not encouraging any drinking. So file that away — it's mostly for my parents. But I think you'll enjoy it.

Suppose that every day, 10 people — for our purposes, we'll say reporters — go out for beer, and the bill for all 10 comes to \$100. If these 10 reporters paid their tab every night the way we pay our taxes, it would go something like this:

The first four, the poorest, would pay nothing. The fifth would pay \$1. The sixth would pay \$3. The seventh would pay \$7. The eighth would pay \$12. The ninth would pay \$18. The tenth, the richest, would pay \$59. So that's what they decided to do.

The 10 reporters drank in the bar every day and seemed quite happy with the arrangement, until one day, the bar owner threw them a curveball. "Since you're all such good customers," he said, "I'm going to reduce the cost of your daily beer by \$20." Drinks for the 10 reporters would now cost just \$80.

The group still wanted to pay their bill the way we pay our taxes. So the first four were unaffected; they would still drink for free. But what about the other six? How could they divide the \$20 windfall so that everyone would get their fair share? These are the reporters after all, so they're concerned with fairness.

They realized that \$20 divided by six is \$3.33. But if they subtracted that from everybody's share, then the fifth reporter and the sixth reporter would each end up being paid to drink beer.

So the bar owner suggested that it would be fair to reduce each man's bill by a higher percentage the poorer he was. By doing that, he explained, they'd continue following the principle of the tax system they'd been using. So he proceeded to work out the amounts he suggested that each should pay now.

And so the fifth reporter, like the first four, now paid nothing. He got a 100 percent saving. The sixth now paid \$2 instead of \$3, a 33 percent saving. The seventh now paid \$5 instead of \$7, a 28 percent saving. The eighth now paid \$9 instead of \$12, a 25 percent saving. The ninth now paid \$14 instead of \$18, which was a 22 percent saving. And the tenth now paid \$49 instead of \$59, a 16 percent saving.

So each of the six was better off than before. And the first four continued to drink for free. But once outside the bar, the reporters began to compare their savings. "I only got a dollar out of the \$20 saving," declared the sixth reporter.

And she pointed to the tenth reporter, "he got \$10."

"Yes, that's right," exclaimed the fifth reporter. "I only saved a dollar too. It's unfair that he received ten times more benefit than me!"

"That's true!" shouted the seventh reporter. "Why should he get \$10 back, when I got only \$2? The wealthy gets all the breaks."

"Wait a minute," yelled the first four reporters in unison, "we didn't get anything at all. This new tax system exploits the poor!"

The nine reporters yelled at the tenth and made him feel bad.

So the next night the tenth man didn't show up for drinks, and the nine sat down and had their beers without him. But when it came time to pay the bill, they discovered something important. They no longer had enough money between them all to even cover half of the bill.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is how our tax system works. The people who already pay the highest taxes will naturally benefit from a tax reduction, but not the largest percent benefit. Taxing them too much -- attack them -- and they might start drinking overseas, where the atmosphere is somewhat friendlier.

This is a silly story, of course, but it illustrates some very important points. Our tax cuts and reforms will create a fairer system that works better for everyone. And it will make our country the friendliest in the world for American families trying to build a better life for themselves and their children, and for American companies seeking a competitive edge.

And I'll be happy to get that story to everybody so that you can get those numbers later. Again, I know that that may be an oversimplification, but I think it paints a very good picture of the tax system.

And with that, I'll take your questions.

Q Sarah, first I'd like to get the White House reaction to the indictments of Paul Manafort and Rick Gates -- the agreement with George Papadopoulos. And

specifically, you know, we have heard a couple tweets from the President, if you can help me understand. When he says, "why aren't Crooked Hillary & the Dems the focus," is the President saying that Special Counsel Mueller should really be investigating Hillary Clinton and the Democrats? And is he going to rule out, once and for all, firing Robert Mueller?

MS. SANDERS: Look, I'll address the second question first. The President said last week -- I believe it was last week -- and I've said it several times before, there is no intention or plan to make any changes in regards to the special counsel.

But look, today's announcement has nothing to do with the President, has nothing to do with the President's campaign or campaign activity. The real collusion scandal, as we've said several times before, has everything to do with the Clinton campaign, Fusion GPS, and Russia.

There's clear evidence of the Clinton campaign colluding with Russian intelligence to spread disinformation and smear the President to influence the election. We've been saying from day one there has been no evidence of Trump-Russia collusion, and nothing in the indictment today changes that at all.

Q But the George Papadopoulos agreement is about the campaign. It is specifically about the campaign --

MS. SANDERS: It has nothing to do with the activities of the campaign. It has to do with his failure to tell the truth. That doesn't have anything to do with the campaign or the campaign's activities.

Q But it is the clearest evidence yet of ties between the Trump campaign and Russian officials so --

MS. SANDERS: Again, there are no activities or official capacity in which the Trump Campaign was engaged in any of these activities. Most of them took place well before

the campaign ever even existed.

John.

Q Sarah can you just explain what George Papadopoulos' role with the campaign was?

MS. SANDERS: It was extremely limited; it was a volunteer position. And again, no activity was ever done in an official capacity on behalf of the campaign in that regard.

Q What about the outreach that he was making to campaign officials to try to put together this meeting?

MS. SANDERS: You mean the outreach that was repeatedly denied and pushed away and said --

Q Well, that's what I meant --

MS. SANDERS: -- we're not going to take any action on that?

Q Can you explain what happened with his outreach?

MS. SANDERS: He reached out and nothing happened beyond that -- which, I think, shows, one, his level of importance in the campaign, and, two, shows what little role he had within coordinating anything officially for the campaign.

Q Thanks a lot, Sarah. I wanted to ask about Mr. Mueller's investigation. The President, at times, has called it a "hoax" and he's called it a "witch hunt." You've used similar type of language before, as it relates to his investigation.

Last week, you indicated, Sarah, that you believe that Mr. Mueller is wrapping up his investigation. And I've heard similar things coming from other senior administration officials. Do you still believe that Mr. Mueller is in the process of wrapping up his investigation?

MS. SANDERS: We still expect this to conclude soon. Yes.

Q Thank you Sarah. Paul Manafort was high-ranking in the President's campaign at one time. I'd like to know what the President's relationship is with him now. Do they still talk? When was the last time they might have had contact?

MS. SANDERS: As far as we can tell, we know they haven't spoken in several months. The last known conversation was back all the way to February. And as far as anything beyond that, with Paul, I'm not sure of any other contact.

Q And Rick Gates as well?

MS. SANDERS: I know that there was some initial contact after the President was sworn in with him at meetings here at the White House, but nothing directly with the President.

Deborah?

Q Yeah, thank you, Sarah. On March 31, according to the affidavit by Mr. Papadopoulos, he attended a foreign policy meeting; the President was there. He said that he talked about how he -- that Russia wanted to talk to the President. What did the President think when he said he wanted to arrange a meeting between Trump and Putin? And how did other people in the campaign react to that?

MS. SANDERS: I'm not sure that the President recalls specific details of the meeting. Again, it was a brief meeting that took place quite some time ago. It was the one time that group ever met. And beyond that, I really don't have anything to add.

John Gizzi.

Q Thank you, Sarah. As you mentioned, Mr. Manafort and Mr. Gates were named in this for things not having anything to do with the campaign, but with alleged money-laundering regarding other business. Now under those circumstances, would the President consider or rule out pardoning either of them?

MS. SANDERS: I haven't had any conversations with him about that. I think we should let the process play through before we start looking at those steps.

Annie.

Q Papadopoulos, at this time, was working -- was reporting to Jeff Sessions at the time, who was overseeing Trump's foreign policy advisory committee. What does this mean for Jeff Sessions?

MS. SANDERS: Again, somebody on a volunteer committee -- I'm not sure how that would impact the Attorney General directly.

Q Can you say -- given what we have learned over the last few hours, can you say when the President was first aware that Russia was behind the hacking and was in the possession of emails -- what they considered to be damaging emails about the Clinton campaign that they were trying to get to the Trump campaign? When was he first aware of that?

MS. SANDERS: I'm not sure of the specific date of when that took place. So I'd have to look and get back to you.

Q Sarah, does the President regret having hired Paul Manafort's to be his campaign manager? And is he and the rest of the White House concerned that this issue will distract from tax reform and the other domestic policy and foreign policy priorities?

MS. SANDERS: We're not worried about it distracting because it doesn't have anything to do with us because this is something that is action that took place outside of the campaign or campaign activity.

Q And as far as whether he regrets having hired him to be campaign manager?

MS. SANDERS: I didn't ask if him that question specifically.

Q Sarah, how can you describe Mr. Papadopoulos' having a limited role when there's a photograph of Mr. Papadopoulos sitting at a table with then-candidate Trump at a national security meeting --

MS. SANDERS: The President has thousands of photographs with millions of people so --

Q And he was also cited by then-candidate Trump in a meeting with the Washington Post as to who his top foreign policy advisors are. That seems to fight against what you're saying.

And also how is it not collusion when George Papadopoulos is in contact with various

people who are promising dirt on Hillary Clinton -- a series of events that closely mirrors what occurred with the President's own son? Did he contact Russians --

MS. SANDERS: This individual was on a --

Q -- in pursuit of information that was damaging about the Clintons. How is all of that not collusion?

MS. SANDERS: Look, this individual was the member of a volunteer advisory council that met one time over the course of a year, and he was part of a list that was read out in the Washington Post. I'd hardly call that some sort of regular advisor or, as you want to push, that he's like a senior member of the staff. He was not paid by the campaign, he was a volunteer on a -- again, a council that met once.

Q And what about these activities? What about these collusion activities, Sarah? He was pursuing information from the Russians --

MS. SANDERS: Again, he was a volunteer. I think that's something you need to ask him. I'm not here to speak on behalf of the thousands of people that may have volunteered on the campaign.

Q Believe it or not, I have a question on this but also on tax reform. The President has called on Congress to investigate Hillary Clinton. Is he confident that they will do that?

MS. SANDERS: I think that's a question you'd have to ask Congress. But I think that there are enough reports and enough information out there that seems to suggest it might not be a bad idea.

Q (Inaudible) any congressional leaders of committees that --

MS. SANDERS: I don't know. I don't know if he's had a member of Congress specifically tell him that they're planning --

Q Okay, my question about tax reform is: Where does the President stand on the idea of phasing in the corporate tax cuts so it would reach 20 percent sometime around 2022?

MS. SANDERS: I think the President has been clear that his priority is to make sure that that's where we start with the tax plan currently. I think, again, he's laid out what his principles are. As of right know, that hasn't changed and don't anticipate that it will.

Major.

Q Sarah, just so we have that terminology straight. When you say George Papadopoulos had no official capacity, what do you mean by that?

MS. SANDERS: I mean he was a volunteer on the campaign and a volunteer member of an advisory council that met one time.

Q So his activities were entirely of his invention? No one asked him to do any of these things? Is that what you're telling the American public?

MS. SANDERS: I'm telling you that he was a volunteer member of an advisory council that literally met one time.

Q Right. But the reason I ask is now there are two episodes in which people associated with the campaign at rather high level -- at least in one instance, and George

Papadopoulos is a member of a foreign policy or military advisory committee -- sought dirt on Hillary Clinton from people representing themselves as either linked to or associated with the Russian government. Is that just a coincidence?

MS. SANDERS: The only interaction I'm aware of that deals with this individual was him reaching out and being repeatedly denied.

So that's all I can tell you is he asked to do things, he was basically pushed back or not responded to in any way. So any actions that he took would have been on his own and you would have to ask him about those because I can't answer --

Q And then what explains later activities that the campaign -- to have that similar -- that same kind of meeting at Trump Tower?

MS. SANDERS: I'm sorry?

Q What explains the campaign's later involvement with those associated with the Russian government -- or said they were -- to get dirt on Hillary Clinton later in the campaign? Are these things -- are they coincidental?

MS. SANDERS: We've addressed that. They took one meeting. Nothing came of it. No, I don't believe so.

Q Does that indicate a pattern of trying to obtain that information from that government?

MS. SANDERS: A pattern of getting information about your opponent? No.

Q From a hostile government?

MS. SANDERS: The big difference here is you have a meeting that took place versus millions of dollars being sent to create fake information to actually influence the election. You compare those two, those are apples and oranges.

What the Clinton campaign did, what the DNC did, was actually exchange money. They took a meeting. Those are far different. And one is pretty common practice in any campaign -- to take a meeting. The other one is actually paying money for false information. That's a big deal and a big difference.

Q Thank you, Sarah. I have two questions for you. But first, if I could follow up on your comment there about the GPS Dossier. This is an issue that many senior-level administration officials have pointed to during these questions about the special counsel. Has the White House asked the Department of Justice to look into this issue?

MS. SANDERS: Not that I'm aware of.

Q Can I follow up on Mueller? You've spoken with the President today?

MS. SANDERS: Yes, I have.

Q Can you give us a little bit about his reaction to the news this morning? Obviously, news that swept the nation's capital, but what -- how did the President respond to this news about two people who did work for his campaign? Was he disappointed that Paul Manafort received this news today -- that he was being charged on these 12 counts?

MS. SANDERS: He responded the same way the rest of us in the White House have, and that's without a lot of reaction because it doesn't have anything to do with us.

Q Sarah, we are now talking about two of the most senior members of the campaign at a very pivotal time -- through and including the RNC last year -- who are now under federal indictment for very serious crimes --

MS. SANDERS: For something they did outside of the campaign.

Q -- that admittedly they did not allegedly conduct during their work for the campaign. But doesn't it speak to the President's judgement that he would choose to have these two individuals in very high positions, having allegedly committed these crimes in the years leading up to their roles?

MS. SANDERS: These were seasoned operatives, not -- you make it sound like they were, you know, regular offenders that have been in massive amounts of trouble. These were seasoned operatives that worked on a number of campaigns. Paul Manafort was brought in to lead the delegate process, which he did, and was dismissed not too long after that.

Q But the President has no regrets?

MS. SANDERS: Again, I didn't ask him that question specifically.

April.

Q Sarah, what leads you to believe that the Mueller investigation will conclude soon? Do you also believe that there could be more indictments? And my third question, on another subject -- welfare reform: The President talked about this a couple of weeks ago, and I've been trying to find out what is the focus. How do you plan to implement welfare reform?

MS. SANDERS: We haven't made any specific announcements when it comes to welfare reform. Those are ongoing conversations and we're looking at ways to improve the system. But nothing specific to roll out at this time.

I'm sorry, what was the first part of your question?

Q The first one: What leads you to believe that this will conclude the Mueller investigation? Have you been given a head's up? What?

MS. SANDERS: Those are the indications that we have at this time. I can't go any further than that.

Q And also do you believe -- indications from who and where? Sarah, indications from where?

MS. SANDERS: As I just said I can't go any further than that.

Q And also what about -- you don't believe there will be any more indictments at all?

MS. SANDERS: That's a question you'd have to ask Robert Mueller.

Q But you're saying that it's going to be concluded soon?

MS. SANDERS: I still (inaudible) that we believe that it will be concluded soon. But beyond that, I don't have anything else to add on a specific timeframe.

Q Sarah, in March, the President called -- March, 2016 -- the President called George Papadopoulos an "excellent guy." Does he still believe that Papadopoulos is an excellent guy?

MS. SANDERS: Look, he was referring to the council. He was going through the list of names with the Washington Post, and nothing more than that -- and complimentary of the people that were volunteering on behalf of the campaign.

Q Papadopoulos told the FBI that a campaign supervisor told him, I would encourage you to make the trip to Russia (inaudible.) How does that not constitute the campaign encouraging him to make contact with Russia?

MS. SANDERS: I'm not aware of that conversation, so I can't speak to that.

Q Sarah, at the end of the day is there any concern at all from this administration -- again, trying to drill down on what was asked earlier -- that two people who worked for the President are now under indictment? One has pleaded guilty. And he promised to hire only the best people. Is this an example of the best people to hire?

MS. SANDERS: Look, again, this does back to these were activities that took place outside of the scope of the campaign. I can't comment on anything they did prior --

Q But are these the best people to hire?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President hired Paul Manafort to handle the delegate process, which he did. And he was dismissed not too long after that.

Q Sarah, last week the administration opposed a federal judge's decision that allowed an undocumented teen immigrant to have an abortion. Now that that case is over, it's been decided -- she's had that abortion. What is the White House reaction to that decision? And does it set a dangerous precedent going forward?

MS. SANDERS: I can't comment on the specifics of that at this point.

Q Was the President aware of this case at all? Did he comment on it?

MS. SANDERS: I didn't speak directly with him about the case.

Ronica.

Q Sarah, thank you. I'd like to ask you about a different topic. Just breaking before the briefing, a court banned the President from changing military policy on service by transgender people. What's the reaction from the White House and the plan moving forward with reference to this?

MS. SANDERS: Obviously, this is something just announced. The Department of Justice has it, they're reviewing, and I'd refer you to them to any specific questions.

Q Congressman Gowdy this weekend had suggested that there should be an investigation into the leaks of the grand jury investigation, or Robert Mueller's investigation. Do you think there should be an investigation? Are you all asking for an investigation?

MS. SANDERS: We haven't asked for that investigation to take place.

Q Would you support an investigation?

MS. SANDERS: I think that any time there is leaking of sensitive information it should be looked into. But beyond that, we don't have any comment.

Kristen.

Q Sarah, thanks. Does the President in any way hold Jared Kushner responsible for hiring Paul Manafort? After all, he was an early supporter of bringing him on board.

MS. SANDERS: Not that I'm aware of, no.

Q And, Sarah, to just follow up on the point of hiring the best people, the top, top people, he said. Does this not at the very least raise questions about President Trump's vetting process and judgement when it comes to bringing on these people?

MS. SANDERS: I don't believe so. I think I've answered that quite a few times today.

Q Sarah, two quick questions. Does the President -- you said back in July that the President believed that the investigation for the special counsel should stay within the confines of Russian election meddling. Given what we learned today, does the President believe Bob Mueller overstepped the boundaries of his investigation?

MS. SANDERS: I haven't spoken with him specifically about that detail.

Q Okay. And my second question, Sarah, would just be on the topic regarding the plea agreement with George Papadopoulos. You've indicted the President did not

remember that March 31st meeting, the photograph, right?

MS. SANDERS: No, I didn't say he didn't remember the meeting. I said he didn't remember those comments from George Papadopoulos.

Q Did he remember anything about that meeting -- his interactions with Papadopoulos -- given that he's talked about his great memory?

MS. SANDERS: I don't believe that he went into detail about the meeting itself. He remembers it taking place, but we didn't go into anything beyond that or into specifics.

Q And specifically did not remember that Russia comments? Did he remember Papadopoulos's presence? Did they have interaction?

MS. SANDERS: Not that I'm aware of.

Q Thank you, Sarah. Gallup just came out with a poll giving 33 percent approval, 62 percent disapproval to the President. What's your reaction? Is the President aware of this? Any plans of changing anything?

MS. SANDERS: Look, we're focused aggressively on pushing forward on a very bold agenda specific to tax reform, tax cuts. I think that the economy continuing to grow and strengthen is something that will certainly change those numbers. But at the same time, I think these are some of the same polls that also said this President would never be President, so I don't have a lot of confidence in them.

I'll take one last question.

Blake.

Q Sarah, can you please clarify your answer to Mara -- that the stock market is moving downwards on this news that possibly the corporate rate could be phased in over several years? I wasn't sure if you were trying to make the point that the President would be for a phase-in or against a phase-in.

MS. SANDERS: No, I said that the President laid out his principles and it doesn't include the phasing in, so we're still committed to that moving forward. And I don't have any reason to believe we'd have changes --

Q So the red line of -- so the red line of the 20 percent corporate rate stands --

MS. SANDERS: I'm not drawing a red line. I'm just saying those are the principles that we've laid out, and we haven't adjusted or changed our principles since this process started.

Thanks so much, guys. Have a good day.

END 1:56 P.M. EDT

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To: Fimrite, Peter[PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 2/9/2018 6:14:56 PM
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

I will call you but below is an on-the-record statement regarding 10 percent cut question:

I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief

“Decisions on office reductions, if needed, will be made based on the final FY2018 budget.”

– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Fimrite, Peter [mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 12:58 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every**

employee, to EPA's Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words "climate change" were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **"Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focused on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded."** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **"Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty."** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **"No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees."** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **"We don't discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9**

Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work. 415-777-8454

Cell. 415-298-2197

Email. pfimrite@sfgate.com

Twitter. @pfimrite

To: John Siciliano[jsiciliano@washingtonexaminer.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:56:33 PM
Subject: RE: media question

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: John Siciliano [mailto:jsiciliano@washingtonexaminer.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: media question

Do you have a response to Definers canceling their contract with EPA?

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Letendre, Daisy[letendre.daisy@epa.gov]
From: Bennett, Tate
Sent: Fri 10/20/2017 4:35:28 PM
Subject: Re: Good line from Fox interview

Here is the entire piece

<http://www.fox26houston.com/news/epa-chief-declares-dioxin-dump-dangerous-pledges-clean-up>

On Oct 20, 2017, at 12:33 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

This clip is in our release.

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 20, 2017, at 11:31 AM, Bennett, Tate <Bennett.Tate@epa.gov> wrote:

Adding Jahan

Sent from my iPad

On Oct 20, 2017, at 12:31 PM, Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov> wrote:

Nice, we need to find this clip. Was this radio or TV? Jahan, do I need to ask Nancy again about definers?

-----Original Message-----

From: Bennett, Tate

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 12:27 PM

To: Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Letendre, Daisy <letendre.daisy@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Good line from Fox interview

Critics have suggested the EPA chief would be hesitant to take on the pair of Fortune 500 companies financially responsible for the expensive cleanup. But today Pruitt emphatically pledged the full authority of his agency to force an effective cleanup.

Sent from my iPad

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 6/19/2017 2:58:46 PM
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...
[5.22.17 Definers EPA Monitoring Proposal.pdf](#)

George has been dragging his feet on this for 7 weeks. Attached is the contract.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 9:38 AM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>; 'jpounder@definerscorp.com' <jpounder@definerscorp.com>
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...

George –

I am adding you to this email. Can you please contact Joe Pounder and circle back with me. I believe Definers is able to do morning summaries or morning media matrixs that we can circulate within the agency to interested people and they are also capable of doing live-time alerts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Thank you,

Jahan

From: Joe Pounder [<mailto:jpounder@definerscorp.com>]
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2017 5:26 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Updated Proposal...

Mr. Wilcox,

Please find attached an updated proposal with examples of actual alerts and daily matrix. Please let us know if you have any other questions. Our plan is when it is rolled out to clients, these alerts will be compiled into our Definers Console where they will be also stored and searchable in addition to emailed directly to inboxes. Thanks again.

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definerscorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 2/5/2018 11:21:50 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses: EAGLES WIN: Is Philly still standing? -- BRYCE cashes in on Ryan's 1.50 tweet -- SESSIONS MOSTLY SILENT as Trump dumps on FBI -- BENDER SCOOP: PENTAGON lost track of 800M

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

FRONT PAGES: PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER: "AT LAST: EAGLES FINALLY WIN THE SUPER BOWL" <http://bit.ly/2E12F9v> ... **PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS:** "WON FOR THE AGES!" <http://bit.ly/2EHSzHP> ... **BOSTON GLOBE:** "DEEP-SIXED" <http://bit.ly/2E232N0> ... **BOSTON HERALD:** "SLIPPED AWAY" <http://bit.ly/2BWshyg>

Good Monday morning. OVER THE WEEKEND, PAUL RYAN deleted a tweet, which seemed to tout a woman whose pay increased by \$1.50 a week from the GOP tax bill. **RANDY BRYCE**, the Democrat who is running against Ryan, asked donors to chip in \$1.50 as a show of opposition to Ryan. Since then, he says he raised \$130,109 from donors -- roughly half of whom donated \$1.50 to his campaign.

... **HE'LL NEED THE CASH:** Bryce has just shy of \$1.3 million on hand, and spent an eye-popping \$922,567 last quarter. **RYAN** has \$9.6 million on hand.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR THIS WEEK -- HERE WE GO AGAIN... THE FUNDING FIGHT: The government runs out of money Thursday. There is little expectation that Congress will be able to find a path forward on a long-term budget deal and DACA this week. **ONCE AGAIN**, look for Republicans to tee up a short-term funding bill as soon as tomorrow. This is getting harder and harder for conservatives to swallow. **BUT** senior Republican leaders seem to think they could squeeze a funding bill to keep the government open until the end of the month through the House with only GOP votes.

-- **REMINDER: HOUSE DEMOCRATS** are scheduled to go on their legislative retreat in Cambridge, Maryland, Wednesday, so this chapter of the funding fight needs to be wrapped up by then.

OUR BEST GUESS: They squeeze the funding bill through the House after a few fits and panics. Maybe they add some defense spending to the bill to sweeten it for conservatives. And then the Senate -- which seems hell-bent on avoiding a shutdown scare -- clears it without much fanfare.

-- THIS IS UNLIKELY TO DO THE TRICK: "'Dreamer' Talks Aim to End Budget Impasse," by WSJ's Kristina Peterson and Laura Meckler: "Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) plan to unveil a proposal that offers a path to citizenship for Dreamers and orders a comprehensive study to determine what border-security measures are needed. But the bill stops well short of almost all of the president's demands -- including immediate funding for the wall along the southern border -- and is likely to meet a chilly reception from conservative Republicans. Still ... [the] bill with Mr. Coons could also benefit from good timing, as the March 5 deadline draws closer and lawmakers grapple with the political consequences of failing to reach any agreement." <http://on.wsj.com/2EeiMQm>

-- A MORE LIKELY SCENARIO: "Congress weighs leaving Dreamers in limbo another year," by Seung Min Kim: "Congress may just end up punting on its Dreamer dilemma. As lawmakers grasp for a solution for the young undocumented immigrants, one option is a temporary extension -- perhaps one year -- of their legal protections paired with a little bit of cash for border security. 'That may be where we're headed because, you know, Congress is pretty dysfunctional,' said Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), one of the few to publicly acknowledge the possibility of a temporary fix. 'That'd be a real loss. But that's probably where we're headed, OK?'

"Some senators are already deriding a yearlong patch as 'misguided,' a 'Plan Z' and a proposal that would keep immigrants 'in fear.' But lawmakers have only until March 5 to save the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program under President Donald Trump's deadline. And in a Congress that has routinely struggled to keep the lights on, at least some lawmakers say a temporary fix for Dreamers might be all but inevitable. Lawmakers return to Washington this week with another government shutdown looming after Feb. 8 and a deal on Dreamers still far out of reach - a reality that could make a DACA stopgap increasingly appealing." <http://politi.co/2GPchSK>

BLOCKBUSTER -- POLITICO'S BRYAN BENDER: "Exclusive: Massive Pentagon agency lost track of hundreds of millions of dollars": "One of the Pentagon's largest agencies can't account for hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of spending, a leading accounting firm says in an internal audit obtained by POLITICO that arrives just as President Donald Trump is proposing a boost in the military budget.

"Ernst & Young found that the Defense Logistics Agency failed to properly document more than \$800 million in construction projects, just one of a series of examples where it lacks a paper trail for millions of dollars in property and equipment. Across the board, its financial management is so weak that its leaders and oversight bodies have no reliable way to track the huge sums it's responsible for, the firm warned in its initial audit of the massive Pentagon purchasing agent.

"The audit, obtained by POLITICO, raises new questions about whether the Defense Department can responsibly manage its \$700 billion annual budget - let alone the additional billions that Trump plans to propose this month. The department has never undergone a full audit despite a congressional mandate - and to some lawmakers, the messy state of the Defense Logistics Agency's books indicates one may never even be possible." <http://politi.co/2E19p7j>

***** **A message from Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses:** Small businesses power the economy and generate widespread job growth. That is why Goldman Sachs is hosting the *10,000 Small Businesses* Summit in Washington, DC. Learn how we can #MakeSmallBig on February 13 and 14: GS.com/10KSBSummit *****

PAGING GOP LEADERSHIP -- THE POLITICAL CLIMATE, via Elena Schneider: "Is it time for House Republicans to start freaking out? More than 40 House Republican incumbents were outraised in the final quarter of 2017 by one -- or several -- of their Democratic opponents, according to the latest round of fundraising numbers. And of that group, more than a dozen had less cash on hand than their Democratic challengers.

"For the GOP, here's the really disturbing part: The trendline is getting worse, not better. Despite the myriad advantages of incumbency and control of Congress, there are more House members with less cash on hand than their Democratic challengers than the quarter before.

"Those numbers should be concerning for all Republicans," said Mike DuHaime, a GOP consultant based in New Jersey. 'This is going to be the most challenging political environment since 2006, so you have to be ready. And lot of these members came in after 2006, so for many, this will be the most challenging environment they've ever run in. And that's going to prove difficult.'" <http://politi.co/2BWn0XI>

WHAT'S THE A.G. HAVE TO SAY? -- "Sessions Silent as Trump Attacks His Department, Risking Independence and Morale," by NYT's Katie Benner: "As President Trump hammers away at the Justice Department's credibility, one voice has been notably absent in the department's defense: the one at the top. The attorney general, Jeff Sessions, has been largely quiet and even yielding as the president leads the most public and prolonged political attack on the department in history, a silence that breaks with a long tradition of attorneys general protecting the institution from such interference. ... Current and former prosecutors say Mr. Sessions's tepid response reflects efforts to appease Mr. Trump, even at the expense of morale among the department's employees, and has raised fears that prosecutors cannot depend on protection from political interference." <http://nyti.ms/2BVOgFF>

THE SHERIFF WITH KID GLOVES -- "U.S. consumer protection official puts Equifax probe on ice - sources," by Reuters' Patrick Rucker: "Mick Mulvaney, head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, has pulled back from a full-scale probe of how Equifax failed to protect the personal data of millions of consumers, according to

people familiar with the matter. Equifax said in September that hackers stole personal data it had collected on some 143 million Americans.

"Richard Cordray, then the CFPB director, authorized an investigation that month, said former officials familiar with the probe. But Cordray resigned in November and was replaced by Mulvaney, President Donald Trump's budget chief. The CFPB effort against Equifax has sputtered since then, said several government and industry sources, raising questions about how Mulvaney will police a data-warehousing industry that has enormous sway over how much consumers pay to borrow money."

<http://reut.rs/2E35wuC>

THE NEW NUCLEAR ARMS RACE -- "To Counter Russia, U.S. Signals Nuclear Arms Are Back in a Big Way," by NYT's David Sanger and William J. Broad: "A treaty committing the United States and Russia to keep their long-range nuclear arsenals at the lowest levels since early in the Cold War goes into full effect on Monday. When it was signed eight years ago, President Barack Obama expressed hope that it would be a small first step toward deeper reductions, and ultimately a world without nuclear weapons. Now, that optimism has been reversed. A new nuclear policy issued by the Trump administration on Friday, which vows to counter a rush by the Russians to modernize their forces even while staying within the treaty limits, is touching off a new kind of nuclear arms race.

"This one is based less on numbers of weapons and more on novel tactics and technologies, meant to outwit and outmaneuver the other side. The Pentagon envisions a new age in which nuclear weapons are back in a big way - its strategy bristles with plans for new low-yield nuclear weapons that advocates say are needed to match Russian advances and critics warn will be too tempting for a president to use. The result is that the nuclear-arms limits that go into effect on Monday now look more like the final stop after three decades of reductions than a way station to further cuts."

<http://nyti.ms/2BWk7WP>

TRUMP'S MONDAY -- The president meets with VP Mike Pence in the morning. He and the first lady will fly to Cincinnati, Ohio. Melania Trump will participate in a "meet and greet" and briefing on opioids at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. Trump will tour Sheffer Corporation and deliver remarks on tax reform. The two will then fly back to Washington.

-- **VP MIKE PENCE** speaks with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson by phone at 11:45 a.m., and then goes to Andrews Air Force Base to fly to Alaska -- part of his trip to Asia for the Olympics. He arrives in Alaska at 9 p.m. East coast time -- 5 p.m. in Alaska -- and has a briefing at NORTHCOM, and tours the base. At 6:45 p.m. -- 10:45 p.m. our time -- he'll fly from Alaska to Tokyo.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Philadelphia Eagles' quarterback Nick Foles holds up the Vince Lombardi Trophy after Super Bowl 52 against the New England Patriots on Feb. 4 in Minneapolis. The Eagles won 41-33, their first ever Super Bowl win in franchise history. | Chris O'Meara/AP Photo

BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- "Cities and states take the lead on banning bump stocks," by AP's Lisa Marie Pane: "In the immediate aftermath of the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history, there was a fevered pitch to ban bump stocks, the device that allowed the shooter's semi-automatic rifles to mimic the rapid fire of machine guns. With that push stalled at the federal level, a handful of states and some cities are moving ahead with bans of their own.

"Massachusetts and New Jersey -- two states led by Republican governors -- as well as the cities of Denver and Columbia, South Carolina, have enacted laws prohibiting the sale and possession of the devices, which were attached to a half-dozen of the long guns found in the hotel room of the Las Vegas shooter who in October killed 58 people and injured hundreds more attending a nearby outdoor concert. A little over a dozen other states are also considering bans on bump stocks.

"Gun-control advocates say the push fits a pattern in gun politics: inaction in Washington that forces states to take the lead. Gun-rights advocates call it a knee-jerk reaction that will do little to stop bad guys from killing, and vow a legal challenge." <http://bit.ly/2E3lkgR>

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ILLINOIS? -- YIKES: "Holocaust denier poised to claim GOP nomination in Illinois race for Congress," by Chicago Sun-Times' Lynn Sweet and Frank Main: "Arthur Jones -- an outspoken Holocaust denier, activist anti-Semite and white supremacist -- is poised to become the Republican nominee for an Illinois congressional seat representing parts of Chicago and nearby suburbs. ... Jones, 70, a retired insurance agent who lives in suburban Lyons, has unsuccessfully run for elected offices in the Chicago area and Milwaukee since the 1970s. ...

"Since the 1990s to 2016, Jones has jumped in the GOP 3rd Congressional District primary seven times, never even close to becoming a viable contender. The outcome will be different for Jones in the Illinois primary on March 20, 2018. To Jones' own amazement, he is the only one on the Republican ballot." <http://bit.ly/2GMcOot>

-- "'Repulsive' campaign ad creates firestorm in Illinois," by Natasha Korecki in Chicago: "A new ad that's been denounced as anti-immigrant, 'racist,' 'sexist' and 'transphobic,' is causing an uproar in Illinois, with leaders from both parties calling for its removal. But Republican state Rep. Jeanne Ives, whose campaign produced the ad in her primary election challenge to Gov. Bruce Rauner, is refusing to pull the spot, saying it exposes Rauner's 'betrayal' of GOP voters. The new ad mockingly thanks the governor for clearing a path in support of a series of social issues. Then it taps just about every conservative bogeyman in Illinois politics, and every lightning-rod cultural

issue." <http://politi.co/2nJJ0jm> ... **The ad** <http://bit.ly/2nDapo7>

***** **A message from Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses:** Small businesses comprise 99% of U.S. employer firms and create 63% of net new jobs in America. That is why Goldman Sachs is hosting the *10,000 Small Businesses Summit* in Washington, DC. The event will focus on charting a path to help small business owners grow and compete successfully. Learn how we can #MakeSmallBig on February 13 and 14: GS.com/10KSBSummit *****

MEDIAWATCH -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- LISA MASCARO is joining the Associated Press as its new chief congressional correspondent. She comes on board from the L.A. Times where she has covered Congress since 2010.

-- **TJ DUCKLO** is joining NBC News as senior communications director. He will work primarily with "NBC Nightly News" with Lester Holt. He was a producer on Showtime's "The Circus" and communications director for Bloomberg Politics during the 2016 campaign.

TRUMP ALUMNI -- "Sundheim Taps Ex-White House Economic Adviser for New Hedge Fund," by Bloomberg's Katya Kazakina: "Daniel Sundheim, whose new hedge fund will invest in stock and private equity deals, hired a former deputy White House economic adviser to help run it. Jeremy Katz, who was a lieutenant to National Economic Council director Gary Cohn, joins Sundheim's firm as president and chief operating officer, according to a letter to prospective investors seen by Bloomberg News. Sundheim also revealed details about his fund, scheduled to start in the third or fourth quarter, including that it will focus on a global equity long-short strategy and 'opportunistically' invest in private equity." <http://bit.ly/2GOU7Ag>

-- **"Kobach will represent himself in upcoming trial. Is it a smart move?"** by Wichita Eagle's Jonathan Shorman: "When a federal lawsuit challenging Kansas's proof of citizenship voter law goes to trial in March, Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach plans to be in the courtroom. He'll be the attorney defending the law he crafted. Rarely, if ever, do statewide elected officials represent themselves at trial. The unusual situation is made possible by Attorney General Derek Schmidt. Kobach, who is being sued in his official capacity as secretary of state, received permission from Schmidt to represent himself at the trial-court level in the lawsuit after he agreed that the secretary of state's office will pay for all costs of the case." <http://bit.ly/2nCTJwZ>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.) on the red eye from SFO to Dulles ... New Fed Chairman Jay Powell at the Caps-Golden Knights game -- **pic** <http://bit.ly/2nCljJA>

SPOTTED at Adrienne Arsht's birthday party this weekend -- after dinner, there was a

musical cabaret performance by 89-year-old jazz legend Marilyn Maye: Christine Lagarde, Tom Bossert, Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), Ambassador of Columbia to the U.S. Camilo Reyes, former defense secretary Bill Cohen, former Amb. to France Charles Rivkin, former Amb. to El Salvador Mari Carmen Aponte, Amb. Capricia Marshall, Michael Chertoff, Tom Nides and Virginia Moseley, Bob Barnett and Rita Braver, Bret and Amy Baier, Michael LaRosa, Wayne and Katherine Reynolds, Fred Kempe and Pam Meyer, Paige Ennis, Jesse Rodriguez, Mark Shriver, Ann and Lloyd Hand, Robert Pullen, Luke Frazier, Laura Liswood, Boyden Gray.

TRANSITIONS -- EMILY SCHILLINGER, communications director for the House Ways and Means Committee, is joining the American Investment Council as vice president for public affairs.

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: OBAMA ALUMNI:** The Center for American Progress Action Fund hired **Jesse Lee** as their VP of communications. He spent eight years in the Obama White House, including the last two as special assistant to the president and director of rapid response. In 2017, he also helped launch the organization Protect Democracy.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): John LaBombard, communications director for Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), turned 34 (hat tip: Mitchell Rivard, who was on time)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Michael Steel, managing director of Hamilton Place Strategies. **A fun fact about Michael:** "While I can't match Boehner's claim that he had 'every lousy job you can think of,' I did work as a paperboy, at Chick-Fil-A, Old Navy, and Little Caesars, as a night manager at a bookstore, as a waiter, busboy and bartender in Chapel Hill, and as a cook at a Greek restaurant in Jackson, Mississippi."

Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2nCwhQs>

BIRTHDAYS: Tom Reynolds, who works in policy comms at Facebook ... Clark Stevens, director of the office of government affairs and strategic partnerships at Airbnb ... Evan Wolfson ... Jaime Harrison, DNC associate chair and counselor, is 42 (h/t Jon Haber) ... Phil Kim of KKR ... Drew Godinich is 27 ... Ryan Velasco with Ogilvy PR ... M. Joseph Coudert is 54 ... William Upton, account executive at CRC Public Relations ... Shelly Palmer ... Politico's Glen Mazza ... writer Gina Hyams ... Jayne Chapman ... Marshall Project reporter Alysia Santo ... Grant Carlisle ... Trevor Kincaid, now at the Brunswick Group, was deputy assistant USTR for public affairs under Obama and is a Florida State alum (h/t Andrew Bates) ... Sarabeth Berman, global head of public affairs at Teach for All (hubby tip: Evan Osnos) ... Mike Kiernan (h/t Teresa Vilmain) ... Eric McAlister ...

... **Vinoda Basnayake**, of counsel and chair of the D.C. gov't relations practice at Nelson Mullins ... BuzzFeed's Lisa Tozzi, a NYT alum ... Bret Jacobson, partner at digital shop Red Edge ... Lynsey Humphrey ... Jordan Wilson ... Nicole Levy of amNewYork ... Armstrong Williams is 56 ... Jillian Davidson, state research deputy director at America Rising, is 29 (h/t Rachael Parry) ... Ralph Z. Hallow, chief political

writer for the WashTimes ... Edelman's Ashley Whitlock ... former Mich. Gov. Jennifer Granholm is 59 (h/t Mitchell Rivard) ... Margaret Franklin ... Rachel Swartz ... Rizwan Asghar ... Bob Gibson, executive director of the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership ... Phyllis Watt Jordan ... Douglas MacKenzie ... Richard Parker ... Andy Baldwin ... Rich Scully ... Lisa Kohnke ... Jordan Wilson ... financial writer Jane Bryant Quinn is 79 (h/t AP)

***** **A message from Goldman Sachs *10,000 Small Businesses*:** The overarching goal of *10,000 Small Businesses* is to help small business owners create jobs and economic opportunity. To celebrate their achievements, Goldman Sachs is hosting the first-ever *10,000 Small Businesses* Summit in Washington, DC. Learn how we can #MakeSmallBig on February 13 and 14: GS.com/10KSBSummit *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 9/21/2017 10:29:32 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by UC Davis: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW on the healthcare front -- TRUMP refuses to tell Theresa May whether he's going to pull out of the Iran deal -- THE MUELLER STORIES -- AMERICANS shrug at tax reform -- B'DAY: Brianna Keilar

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by UC Davis

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Thursday morning. THE BIG STORY -- BURGESS EVERETT and SEUNG MIN KIM: "Senate girds for final Obamacare repeal vote: The majority leader's office does leave some wiggle room, however": "It's still anyone's guess whether the bill's backers can get to 50 votes. One Republican senator suggested that McConnell may ultimately decide to bring the bill up for another failed vote, in part to show GOP donors and President Donald Trump that the Senate GOP tried again.

"In an interview, McCain sounded like he could end up tanking a bill written by Graham, his close friend. 'Nothing has changed. If McConnell wants to put it on the floor, that's up to McConnell,' McCain said. 'I am the same as I was before. I want the regular order.' Asked if that means he's a 'no' vote, McCain said: 'That means I want the regular order. It means I want the regular order!'

"Murkowski said Wednesday that she is still undecided , stressing that she needs 'full understanding as to numbers and formulas' under the Graham-Cassidy bill. 'Just last evening, late, my team was on the phone with the folks from [Health and Human Services] because we've got hard questions about numbers that we feel that we deserve an answer to,' Murkowski said. 'So we've been working through that.'"
<http://politi.co/2hl1ZOe>

-- FIRST THINGS FIRST: THIS ISN'T A DONE DEAL IN THE SENATE: As Burgess and SMK write, this is not sealed up. McCain and Murkowski have not definitively said where they stand on Graham-Cassidy. McCain keeps saying he wants regular order, which means putting the bill through the committee process. The bill will get a hearing next week, but just one. Will that be enough for McCain? Our Senate GOP sources say the plan is to throw this bill on the floor next week -- the GOP's ability to pass it on a

simple majority expires Sept. 30. McConnell's office says it's his "intention" to vote on this bill next week. Intention doesn't always translate to action.

-- COULD DEMOCRATS SLOW THIS DOWN, OR END IT? Eh, kind of. They can try to drown the process in amendments. There's no more debate time left for this on the floor. So Democrats can offer unlimited amendments to slow the process down, and try to drag it past Sept. 30.

-- WHAT THE SENATE PROCESS WILL LOOK LIKE, per an aide -- If and when the Senate moves forward, it will take up the House-passed health care bill, and there will be a vote on the motion to proceed to that bill, which will require a simple majority. At that point, anyone can offer amendments, and they will get a vote -- amendments are unlimited. Senators could motion to waive points of order, if they are raised. When the Senate is done voting on amendments, the Senate will move to vote on the House bill -- which will be, theoretically, amended by Graham-Cassidy.

-- THE PROBLEMS IN THE HOUSE. ... SEVERAL TOP-LEVEL SOURCES tell us this will be a tough lift in the House. It's not going to fly through. Will it pass? Maybe. But here are some issues that will come up in the House:

A) Conservatives have complained to us that this bill does not do enough to cut off funds to Planned Parenthood. **B)** There are plenty of blue-state Republicans whose states would suffer who will be pressured to vote against the bill. **C)** There is no CBO score.

-- COULD THESE PROBLEMS BE SOLVED? Yeah, sure. Congress could pass a sidecar -- a separate legislative vehicle that could carry some patches to Graham-Cassidy. But they'd have to do this on a must-pass bill so it doesn't endlessly linger.

THE BACKSTORY -- "The unlikely group who brought Obamacare repeal back to life," by Jen Haberkorn and Rachael Bade: "Senate Republicans' last-ditch attempt to repeal and replace Obamacare rests on the unlikely collaboration of a veteran senator who can't stand health policy, a wonky freshman who has never passed major legislation and a former senator who lost his seat a decade ago. Together, Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Bill Cassidy (R-La.) and former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum crafted the latest GOP repeal bill in hopes of delivering on the party's seven-year-old campaign promise to repeal Obamacare." <http://politi.co/2fb54iU>

OVERHEARD AT DCA ... -- AP's CALVIN WOODWARD: "Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham on Wednesday appealed for support from fellow senators for his GOP health care bill despite 'all its imperfections.' 'We're going to vote,' Graham told broadcaster Sean Hannity. 'Everybody will be held accountable.' Graham made his comments in an overheard cellphone call in front of a passenger at Reagan National Airport before he boarded a flight. They were misinterpreted by The Associated Press as being delivered to a fellow senator. Graham's office did not dispute that interpretation when asked about the comments and did not say who was on the call with the senator. It turned out to be

Hannity." <http://bit.ly/2wA1OJc>

-- Kimmel fires back at Cassidy over Obamacare repeal bill," by Cristiano Lima: "Jimmy Kimmel escalated his war of words with Sen. Bill Cassidy over his proposed Obamacare repeal bill Wednesday night, blasting the lawmaker for 'defending the indefensible' and continuing to support a measure he said was 'by many accounts the worst health-care bill yet.' Kimmel torched Cassidy for saying earlier Wednesday that the late-night host 'does not understand' his health-care bill, adding that the Republican senator from Louisiana 'either doesn't understand his own bill or he lied to me.'"

<http://politi.co/2xj1BqT> ... **Video** <http://bit.ly/2xgWKJj>

-- "Chuck Grassley: Fulfilling campaign promise just as important as 'substance of health bill," by Des Moines Register's Jason Noble: "Despite many evident shortcomings in a bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act health care law, Republicans have a responsibility to pass it, U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley said Wednesday. ... 'You know, I could maybe give you 10 reasons why this bill shouldn't be considered,' Grassley said [to Iowa reporters]. 'But Republicans campaigned on this so often that you have a responsibility to carry out what you said in the campaign. That's pretty much as much of a reason as the substance of the bill.' Grassley also expressed doubt, however, that the bill would pass in the Senate ... 'No, I think we're one or two votes short and I don't see those other one or two votes coming,' he said when asked if the votes were there. 'I hope I'm wrong.'" <http://dmreg.co/2hiA19q>

-- "Left on 'full war footing' to stop Obamacare repeal," by Elana Schor: "The liberal activists roused into the streets by President Donald Trump are revving up for one last campaign to save Obamacare. The sudden resurgence of Republicans' repeal push appeared to catch Democrats and their base by surprise. But ahead of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's plans to vote next week on a new bill to dismantle the health law, the Democratic grass roots is on what one leading activist called 'full war footing.'" <http://politi.co/2w8Acqh>

LANHEE CHEN in the WSJ: "Republicans Get One Last Chance on ObamaCare Reform: Graham-Cassidy is not perfect, but it creates a competition of ideas and gives power back to states." <http://on.wsj.com/2w8b9Uo>

SPOTTED : Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) dropping off his Capital Bikeshare bike last night at the Giant on H Street NE ... Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) last night at the Hamilton. "Folks were shaking her hand and saying thank you for the no vote on GCHJ," per our tipster. (There hasn't been a vote, of course, but Collins has pretty much signaled she's not supportive of the bill.)

WHAT SENATE REPUBLICANS ARE READING -- "Tax Reform Progress," by WSJ editorial board: "House Republicans like to grouse about the Senate as a legislative graveyard, but on tax reform GOP Senators may be saving the day. A tentative deal between Senators Pat Toomey and Bob Corker to create \$1.5 trillion in tax-cutting room as part of the budget resolution could rescue the House from its familiar factional

dysfunction." <http://on.wsj.com/2wBlexq>

... BUT, BUT, BUT -- "Tax reform lags other issues on list of voters' concerns," by Bernie Becker: "Republicans plan on making tax reform one of their top policy priorities this fall, but it's far from clear that's what voters actually want. One in five adults said that reducing taxes for businesses and individuals should be a major focus for Congress this fall, a POLITICO-Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health poll found, with a higher percentage calling for action on items like lowering prescription drug costs, increasing the minimum wage and infrastructure spending. Even among GOP voters, support for tax reform was rather muted, with far more Republicans interested in continuing the battle over repealing Obamacare. A third of Republicans called for taxes to be a key part of the congressional to-do list, roughly the same as wanted more defense spending and a focus on reducing federal debt. About half of Republicans want Congress to maintain its efforts to roll back the Affordable Care Act." **For Pros**
<http://politico.pro/2fD0CdG>

***** **A message from UC Davis:** As the No. 1 agricultural university in the nation, UC Davis understands how food touches every living thing and what's at stake if we don't answer its challenges. Our research innovations and partnerships with farms, industry and policymakers around the world help ensure healthy, safe food for all. Learn more at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

THE MUELLER STORIES ...

-- "Manafort offered to give Russian billionaire 'private briefings' on 2016 campaign," by WaPo's Tom Hamburger, Ros Helderman, Carol Leonnig and Adam Entous: "Less than two weeks before Donald Trump accepted the Republican presidential nomination, his campaign chairman offered to provide briefings on the race to a Russian billionaire closely aligned with the Kremlin, according to people familiar with the discussions.

"Paul Manafort made the offer in an email to an overseas intermediary, asking that a message be sent to Oleg Deripaska, an aluminum magnate with whom Manafort had done business in the past, these people said. 'If he needs private briefings we can accommodate,' Manafort wrote in the July 7, 2016, email, portions of which were read to The Washington Post along with other Manafort correspondence from that time. ...

"There is no evidence in the documents showing that Deripaska received Manafort's offer or that any briefings took place. And a spokeswoman for Deripaska dismissed the email exchanges as scheming by 'consultants in the notorious 'beltway bandit' industry.'
<http://wapo.st/2jMI9AN>

-- TIM MILLER (@timodc): "Campaign managers have so much free time that they frequently give private briefings to rich people who aren't contributing to the campaign."

-- STILL AT IT!: "Manafort Working on Kurdish Referendum Opposed by U.S.," by

NYT's Ken Vogel and Jo Becker: "Paul J. Manafort, the former campaign chairman for President Trump who is at the center of investigations into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election, is working for allies of the leader of Iraq's Kurdish region to help administer and promote a referendum on Kurdish independence from Iraq.

'The United States opposes the referendum, but Mr. Manafort has carved out a long and lucrative career advising foreign clients whose interests have occasionally diverged from American foreign policy. And he has continued soliciting international business even as his past international work has become a focus of the investigation by the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, into ties between Russia and Mr. Trump and his associates, including possible collusion between them to influence the presidential election. In fact, the work for the Kurdish group appears to have been initiated this summer around the time that federal authorities working for Mr. Mueller raided Mr. Manafort's home in Virginia and informed him that they planned to indict him."

<http://nyti.ms/2xx67ED>

-- **"Manafort used Trump campaign account to email Ukrainian operative,"** by Josh Dawsey: "Former Donald Trump aide Paul Manafort used his presidential campaign email account to correspond with a Ukrainian political operative with suspected Russian ties, according to people familiar with the correspondence. Manafort sent emails to seek repayment for previous work he did in Ukraine and to discuss potential new opportunities in the country, even as he chaired Trump's presidential campaign, these people said." <http://politi.co/2w88w4Y>

-- **"Mueller Seeks White House Documents Related to Trump's Actions as President,"** by NYT's Mike Schmidt: "Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel, has asked the White House for documents about some of President Trump's most scrutinized actions since taking office, including the firing of his national security adviser and F.B.I. director, according to White House officials. Mr. Mueller is also interested in an Oval Office meeting Mr. Trump had with Russian officials in which he said the dismissal of the F.B.I. director had relieved 'great pressure' on him. The document requests provide the most details to date about the breadth of Mr. Mueller's investigation, and show that several aspects of his inquiry are focused squarely on Mr. Trump's behavior in the White House.

"In recent weeks, Mr. Mueller's office sent a document to the White House that detailed 13 areas in which investigators are seeking information. Since then, administration lawyers have been scouring White House emails and asking officials whether they have other documents or notes that may pertain to Mr. Mueller's requests." <http://nyti.ms/2ys0LrZ>

-- **@DanielBice:** "I sent a note to @SheriffClarke's new official email about his security costs as sheriff. The reply: 'F**k you & the horse you rode in on.'"

TRUMP'S THURSDAY -- TRUMP will meet with the presidents from Afghanistan, Ukraine, South Korea, Japan and Turkey before heading to his golf course in

Bedminster, New Jersey.

THE WORLD SCENE -- "NKorea minister calls Trump's threat 'sound of dog barking,'" by AP's Hyung-Jin Kim in Seoul: "The comments are the North's first response to Trump's debut speech at the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday, during which he vowed to 'totally destroy North Korea' if provoked. ... The North's Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho told reporters in New York late Wednesday that 'It would be a dog's dream if he intended to scare us with the sound of a dog barking.' South Korean TV footage also showed Ri saying he feels 'sorry for his aides' when he was asked about Trump's 'Rocket man' comments." <http://bit.ly/2xUNmeY>

-- NYT A1: "Trump Pushes to Revisit Iran Nuclear Deal, and Asks Allies to Help," by Peter Baker and Rick Gladstone: Mr. Trump, who denounced the agreement in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly this week as an 'embarrassment to the United States,' wants to expand on it by extending its time frame and imposing new limits on Iran's development of ballistic missiles. Although European officials strongly back the current deal, some signaled openness to negotiating a separate follow-up agreement.

"The maneuvering suggested a possible path forward for Mr. Trump short of abandoning the accord, but it remains uncertain whether he can reach consensus with the European allies, much less with Russia and China, the deal's other patrons. Iran on Wednesday ruled out revisiting the agreement as President Hassan Rouhani declared it a 'closed issue' and warned that if the United States pulled out, Iran might resume uranium enrichment. 'We see today the Americans are seeking an excuse to break this agreement,' Mr. Rouhani said at a news conference after his own speech to the General Assembly. For that reason, he said, negotiating with 'an American government that tramples on a legal agreement would be a waste of time.'

"Mr. Trump remained coy later when he met with Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain and declined to tell her his decision either. 'Prime Minister May asked him if he would share it with her and he said no,' Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson said." <http://nyti.ms/2ys43M0>

DEPT. OF REBUILDING -- "A stunned Puerto Rico seeks to rebuild after Hurricane Maria," by AP's Danica Coto in San Juan: "Tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans stunned by a hurricane that crushed concrete balconies, twisted metal gates and paralyzed the island with landslides, flooding and downed trees vowed to slowly rebuild amid an economic crisis as rescue crews fanned out across the U.S. territory Thursday. The extent of the damage is unknown given that dozens of municipalities remained isolated and without communication after Maria hit the island Wednesday morning as a Category 4 storm with 155 mph winds, the strongest hurricane to hit Puerto Rico in over 80 years.

"Uprooted trees and widespread flooding blocked many highways and streets across the island, creating a maze that forced drivers to go against traffic and past police cars that used loudspeakers to warn people they must respect a 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew

imposed by the governor to ensure everyone's safety. ... In the capital of San Juan, towering eucalyptus trees fell nearly every other block over a main road dotted with popular bars, restaurants, and coffee shops, some of which were damaged."

<http://bit.ly/2wIGNr7>

THE JUICE ...

-- **BIG DONORS, RNC EDITION:** Shipping magnate Richard Uihlein - \$237,300. (Disclosed in the RNC's most recent FEC filing)

-- **ON THIS WEEK'S NYT BESTSELLER LIST:** Savannah Guthrie and Katy Tur. **See the full list** <http://politi.co/2xSXtBj>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: A man surveys a building demolished by a 7.1 earthquake, in Jojutla, Mexico on Sept. 20. IT was Mexico's deadliest quake in decades. | Eduardo Verdugo/AP Photo

HMM ... -- "A trove of letters passed down from White House press secretaries since the Ford administration has gone missing," by WaPo's Emily Heil: "The jacket that's for decades hung in the closet of the White House press secretary has carried many meanings. It's called the 'flak jacket,' though in reality it's a men's formal tuxedo vest with allegedly bulletproof lining that one former custodian suspected 'wouldn't deflect a BB' ... And it literally held something special: each man or woman who wore it would leave a note in a pocket for his or her successor. The notes, recalled George W. Bush press secretary Dana Perino, remained with the vest, tied together with a red ribbon. Her favorite, she says, was a touching one from her predecessor, Tony Snow, who died of colon cancer in 2008.

"But those missives are now missing. Emails among an informal press-secretary alumni club revealed that the notes that filled a pocket are nowhere to be found - and they've been gone for years. It seems that they might have disappeared sometime during the Obama administration." <http://wapo.st/2xxABpY>

UPDATE -- "Democrats request inspector general investigate Price's use of charter planes," by Rachana Pradhan: "House and Senate Democrats on Wednesday formally requested that the HHS inspector general investigate HHS Secretary Tom Price's use of private planes for government business. Five Democrats asked the inspector general to review Price's adherence to federal regulations on traveling by government employees, following a POLITICO investigation that found Price used charter planes to conduct official business within the United States."

<http://politi.co/2xwX0Dz> ... **The original story** <http://politi.co/2wGaxEW>

NEW BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK COVER -- "It's Not Easy Being Mark

Zuckerberg Right Now," by Max Chafkin and Sarah Frier: "Zuckerberg denies he's running and seems irritated by the speculation. But he concedes that many of the things he's done might seem political -- at least from a certain cynical vantage point that he, for one, doesn't share. 'I get what people are saying,' he says in an interview at Facebook's headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif. ... During the interview he insists his travels have been about personal discovery, not politics ... 'Wouldn't it be better,' he asks with a sly smile, 'if it was actually an accepted thing for people to want to go understand how other people were living?' ...

"Thanks to a block of supervoting shares, he owns 14 percent of Facebook but has voting control of the company ... Last year at the company's annual meeting, he proposed (and then, as Facebook's controlling shareholder, approved) a plan to issue an additional class of shares that will allow him to maintain his control even if he sells most of his shares. ... [T]he proposal also included a provision that would allow him to control the company if he left to serve in government. Zuckerberg says he's been hesitant to explain the provision because of the lawsuit, and adds that he wasn't imagining the presidency but rather taking 'a temporary role in government related to technology or science,' for instance if the U.S. needed to improve a critical part of its technology infrastructure." <https://bloom.bg/2hl2o33> ... **The cover**
<http://politi.co/2yt0wwK>

TRUMP INC. -- "Black employees of BLT Prime, in Trump International Hotel, allege racial discrimination," by WaPo's Jonathan O'Connell: "Dominique Hill and Irving Smith Jr. had good jobs. Last year, Hill worked as a bartender at P.F. Chang's in Tysons Corner and Smith had recently been promoted to bartender at Wildfire grill, also in Tysons. ... In a civil complaint filed Wednesday morning in D.C. Superior Court, Hill, a former BLT employee, and Smith, a current one, allege that the Trump Organization and hotel managing director Mickael Damelin court saw to it that the restaurant routinely steered black employees to less lucrative shifts and subjected them to discriminatory behavior by other staff and by guests. The two men are joined in the case by another former BLT employee, JaNette Sturdivant." <http://wapo.st/2fc8xOi>

***** **A message from UC Davis:** To ensure the production of healthy, safe food, you need to know agriculture. And water management. Plant biology. Ecology. Economics. Engineering. Animal science. Human health. Policy. And community development. At UC Davis, the No. 1 agricultural university in the nation, we know a bright future in food requires expertise, research and collaboration across many fields. It's a complex effort, and one we're proud to cultivate with farms, industry and policymakers around the world. Learn more at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

FIRST FAMILY - "Ivanka Trump reveals battle with postpartum depression," by CBS News' Emily Tillett: "In an interview with talk show host Doctor Oz airing on Thursday, Mr. Trump's eldest daughter Ivanka revealed that she suffered from 'some level' of postpartum depression after delivering each of her three children. 'It was very -

it was a very challenging, emotional time for me because I felt like I was not living up to my potential as a parent or as an entrepreneur and an executive. And I had had such easy pregnancies, that in some way the juxtaposition hit me even harder,' Trump said on the daytime talk show. ...

"When pushed to respond to those who call for Ivanka to be a 'voice of moderation' for Mr. Trump during his most outspoken moments as president, Trump said 'I think my role -- and anyone who works for the president of the United States -- their role is continue to inform, advise, and then ultimately execute. ... I don't view it as my obligation to moderate and I don't think anyone working for a sitting president should see themselves in that capacity.'" <http://cbsn.ws/2fk6tr9>

VALLEY TALK - "Apple Acknowledges Cellular Connectivity Problem in New Watch," by WSJ's Tripp Mickle: "Apple Inc. acknowledged problems with cellular connectivity in its newest smartwatch, raising questions about the device's most significant feature days before it goes on sale in stores in the U.S. and other countries. In a statement Wednesday, Apple said the problem connecting to cellular networks occurs when the Apple Watch Series 3-the first watch from Apple to feature an LTE chip for cellular service-joins 'unauthenticated Wi-Fi wireless networks without connectivity.' Apple said it is 'investigating a fix for a future software release.' Apple issued the statement after reviewers from The Wall Street Journal and the Verge encountered problems at times making calls, connecting with the Siri virtual assistant and maintaining a cellular-network connection." <http://on.wsj.com/2fCP6Pr>

BUSINESS BURST -- "SEC Discloses Edgar Corporate Filing System Was Hacked in 2016," by WSJ's Dave Michaels: "The top U.S. markets regulator disclosed Wednesday that hackers penetrated its electronic system for storing public-company filings last year and may have traded on the information. The Securities and Exchange Commission's chairman, Jay Clayton, revealed the breach in an unusual and lengthy statement issued Wednesday evening that didn't provide many details about the intrusion, including the extent of any illegal trading. The SEC said it was investigating the source of the hack, which exploited a software vulnerability in a part of the agency's Edgar system, a comprehensive database of filings made by thousands of public companies and other financial firms regulated by the SEC." <http://on.wsj.com/2wB5zOJ>

--AP at 5:14 a.m.: "BEIJING (AP) - Standard & Poor's rating agency cuts China's credit rating, citing rising debt."

MEDIAWATCH -- JIM ACOSTA PROFILE - "Jim Acosta Is the White House's Favorite Reporter: The CNN correspondent has embraced the role of White House antagonist, which makes his boss happy. But the White House loves the matchup, too," by Ben Strauss in POLITICO Magazine: "[F]or Acosta, 46, disdain delivered with a theatrical flourish has become something of a signature in the nine months of the Trump administration. Never was that more apparent than when Acosta threw down with White House adviser Stephen Miller. ... Fans leave bourbon in Acosta's mailbox and stop him on the street to thank him for standing up to Trump's policies and press-bashing ... After

Miller stepped away from the podium, he received high-fives from his colleagues."
<http://politi.co/2yfAHZl>

-- **"Preet Bharara joins CNN as senior legal analyst,"** by Michael Calderone: "Preet Bharara, whom President Donald Trump fired as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, is joining CNN as a Senior Legal Analyst, POLITICO has learned."
<http://politi.co/2xSnzEs>

-- **BUZZFEED'S STEVEN PERLBERG: "CNN Digital Is Facing A \$20 Million Budget Shortfall:** CNN is having a huge year on TV, but a budget shortfall at CNN Digital has restricted travel for digital employees and scaled back expenses." <http://bzfd.it/2yf9D3e>

LATE NIGHT BEST -- SEN. JEFF FLAKE (R-ARIZ.) on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert" <http://bit.ly/2w9d6ju>

Playbookers

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- FORMER SEN. KELLY AYOTTE is joining the ONE Campaign's board of directors ... **Pete Maysmith** has been named the new SVP of campaigns at the League of Conservation Voters. He most recently was executive director of Conservation Colorado. ... **JOSHUA DUBOIS** has joined CNN as a contributor. He led faith and community partnerships for Obama and now runs Values Partnerships.

-- **MIKE DUBKE** spoke at a D.C. communicators meeting yesterday about his time in the White House and how companies and outside groups should communicate in the Trump era. John Feehery and EFB Advocacy hosted. **SPOTTED:** Katie Wilson, Eric Wohlschlegel, Brian Sansoni, Greg Crist, John Easton and Adam Belmar, Sue Hensley and Christina Pearson.

BIRTHDAYS OF THE DAY: Brianna Keilar, CNN senior Washington correspondent and anchor. **How she got her start in journalism:** "I was the sports reporter for my high school television news magazine, Diablo Heat. I then had a brief foray into print journalism at my college paper, The Daily Californian, covering women's golf." **Read her Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2xoVYZR> ... **Kiki Burger**, account director in the LA office of Sunshine Sachs and a Politico and Susan G. Komen alum. **How she's celebrating:** "Tonight I'll be up in San Francisco having dinner at Tartine Manufactory with my husband Tim, my sister Kate, my best friend from college Tessie, fellow former D.C.-er Vikrum Ayier and some other friends. Last night Tim and I had an awesome dinner at Bestia here in LA. So basically it revolves around food." **Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2yft8ZQ>

BIRTHDAYS: Shealah Craighead, the White House photographer (hat tip: Peter Watkins) ... Maggie Dougherty, senior policy adviser for U.S. Ambassador to the U.N.

Nikki Haley ... Dean Baquet is 61 ... Cass Sunstein is 63 ... former CIA director James Woolsey is 76 ... former Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear is 73 ... former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is 6-0 ... Brian Roehrkasse, VP of external comms at BAE Systems (h/t Blain Rethmeier) ... Politico's Karey Van Hall and Jessica Andrews ... Rep. Al Lawson (D-Fla.) is 69 ... Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) is 52 ... Anna Greenberg, partner at Greenberg Quinlan Rosner (h/t Jon Haber) ... former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power, celebrating during #UNGA week (h/t Ben) ... Charles Garrison, account executive for local markets at OpenGov ... Ian Russell, principal at Beacon Media and a DCCC alum ...

... **Erin Graefe Dorton**, managing director at Prime Policy ... WSJ's Zeke Turner ... Patricia Summers Edwards, vice consul and head of comms at the British Consulate General in NYC ... Elizabeth Wiebe ... DCCC's Laurel Ruza ... Monica Carneant ... Matt Thorn ... Justin Reilly ... CQ Roll Call's Toula Vlahou ... Lydia Stuckey ... John Celock ... Jonathan Robinson, entrepreneur-in-residence at the VA ... Rachel Barth ... Mark Watson ... Sarah Sibley ... John McKechnie ... Chelsie Paulson ... Ricki Lake ... Kelly Lindner ... Dan Turrentine is 4-0 ... Lisa Marie ... Mike Veselik ... Soren Dorius ... Jane Bowlsby ... David Craighead ... Joerg Wareka ... John Paul Croake (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from UC Davis:** To ensure the production of healthy, safe food, you need to know agriculture. And water management. Plant biology. Ecology. Economics. Engineering. Animal science. Human health. Policy. And community development. At UC Davis, the No. 1 agricultural university in the nation, we know a bright future in food requires expertise, research and collaboration across many fields. It's a complex effort, and one we're proud to cultivate with farms, industry and policymakers around the world. Learn more at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Skolnik, Samuel
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 7:36:13 PM
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Hi Jahan – A couple follow-up questions:

- What was the name of the additional vendor that responded?
- Why did EPA decide to go with Definers instead of this second company?

Thanks,

Sam Skolnik

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:10 PM
To: Skolnik, Samuel <:sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

It's also not accurate to call it a no-bid contract. Below is our statement about that as well:

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:09 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:08 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“The Definers contract is for news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:08 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on

Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:07 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Skolnik, Samuel [<mailto:sskolnik@bgov.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:42 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Hi Jahan –

I just sent the following email to press@epa.gov, but wanted to make sure I got some kind of response today. My questions are regarding Definers Corp.

Any help appreciated,

Sam

--

Hi all. I cover federal contracting and procurement issues for Bloomberg Government, and am working on a daily story based off of reports that EPA today has dropped the contract with Definers Corp. to help the EPA shape press coverage of the agency, through a no-bid contract.

Questions:

1 – Why did EPA drop the Definers contract?

2 – Why was this a sole-source solicitation in the first place?

3 – How did EPA decide to solicit the work from Definers Corp. specifically?

4 – What did EPA need to do to justify this as a sole-source solicitation? Did the agency do what it needed to, to abide the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other pertinent laws? What exactly was that?

5 – Does EPA believe there are inherent risks to agencies, and by extension taxpayers, in no-bid contracts? If so, what are they?

I'm looking for comment (or EPA's written thoughts, attributable to Jahan Wilcox or whoever the right person might be) by 4 p.m. today. My contact info is below.

Thank you,

Sam

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

Direct: (202) 416-3328

Cell: (702) 755-5729 *(On Fridays, please call my Cell)*

sskolnik@bgov.com

@samskolnik

To: Josh Siegel[jsiegel@washingtonexaminer.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 7:57:26 PM
Subject: RE: Can you update your story - this was not no bid.

Confirming you received this.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 2:29 PM
To: 'Josh Siegel' <jsiegel@washingtonexaminer.com>
Cc: 'John Siciliano' <jsiciliano@washingtonexaminer.com>
Subject: Can you update your story - this was not no bid.

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

EPA WEEK AHEAD
Sunday, May 14 - Saturday, May 13, 2017

ITEM 1 (WEEK AHEAD REPORTS):

Thursday, May 25: Speech to the U.S. Oil & Gas Association Board of Directors & Executive Committee Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Thursday, May 25: Meeting with U.S. Rep. Jason Smith.

Friday, May 26 – Monday, May 29: Tulsa, Okla.

Friday, May 26: Tour of Bird Creek contamination site, Tulsa, Okla.

Tuesday, May 30: (T) Travel from DC to KY.

Wednesday, May 31: EPA plans to announce \$56.5 million in funding of new brownfields assessments and cleanup in 171 communities across the country. Press release from HQ and separately from each of the 10 regions.

Wednesday, May 31: (T) Tour of the University of Kentucky for Applied Energy Research, Lexington, KY.

Wednesday, May 31: (T) Speech to the Kentucky Association of Manufactures, KAM 2017 Manufacturers Conference, Lexington, KY.

ITEM 2 (EPA ACCOMPLISHMENTS):

- ✓ **Announced** new Superfund Taskforce: As part of his continued effort to prioritize Superfund cleanups, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt today announced the creation of a Superfund task force to provide recommendations within 30 days on how the EPA can streamline and improve the Superfund program. This includes: restructuring and expediting the cleanup process; reducing the burden on cooperating parties; incentivizing parties to remediate sites; encouraging private investment in cleanups and sites; and, promoting the revitalization of properties across the country.
- ✓ **Announced** a 90-day administrative stay for the August 2016 New Source Performance Standards and Emissions Guidelines for municipal solid waste landfills.
- ✓ **Approved** Massachusetts Army National Guard to resume military training at Joint Base Cape Cod with oversight by the Massachusetts Environmental Management commission
- ✓ **Completed** environmental sampling that showed no Manhattan Project waste in homes samples at Spanish Village in Bridgeton, Mo.
- ✓ **Grants:** Announced grants for the Albermarle-Pamlico national Estuary Partnership, Superfund clean-up for the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma, Water quality grant for the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.
- ✓ **Electeds:** Met with Congressional Coal Caucus, Congressional Western Caucus, U.S. Representatives Olson (TX), Wagner (MO), Upton (MI), Costa (CA).
- ✓ **Interviews:** Fox & Friends, Fox Business, WSJ Editorial Board, Coral Davenport NYT,

EPA WEEK AHEAD
Sunday, May 14 - Saturday, May 13, 2017

TOP CLIPS:

BNA: Pruitt Calls for Streamlined Superfund Cleanup Program

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is seeking recommendations on how to optimize EPA oversight of the Superfund program and increase the roles played by tribes, states, regions and other federal departments in cleanup decisions. In a May 22 memo to staff, Pruitt outlined his charge to a task force designed to streamline the contaminated land program, with a special focus on sediment sites.

BNA: EPA applies brakes on landfill methane rules

The **EPA** took its first step toward reconsidering methane limits for landfills set by the Obama administration by freezing implementation of the rules for 90 days. The Environmental Protection Agency plans to rethink several aspects of the methane limits for both new and existing landfills, including whether the requirements overlap with other existing regulations, **Administrator Scott Pruitt** said in a May 5 [letter](#) to the National Waste & Recycling Association, Solid Waste Association of North America, Republic Services, Inc., Waste Management, Inc., and Waste Management Disposal Services of Pennsylvania, Inc.

North Carolina: Wilmington Star News: EPA awards grant for Albemarle-Pamlico estuary

The **Environmental Protection Agency** has awarded a grant to the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership of \$343,883 in the form of a federal grant appropriated by Congress to identify, conserve, and protect the significant resources within its 30,000-square-mile region of North Carolina and Virginia. Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender counties are in the Cape Fear River basin, south of Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership.

Need to Know Network: EPA Administrator promises to clean up toxic waste sites Obama left behind

Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, **Scott Pruitt**, said that President Trump is committed to cleaning up the more than 1,300 toxic waste sites that were left behind by President Obama during an interview on Wednesday. Pruitt told *Fox and Friends* that many of these sites pose significant health risks to Americans that are living near them and that the **EPA** has been slow to respond, citing "a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that's taken the **EPA** 27 years to make a decision."

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Mon 9/11/2017 7:55:08 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17

I changed it to afternoon because I figured we want this out in time for his briefing book so afternoon seemed more appropriate.

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2017 3:54 PM
To: Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17

We are doing afternoon now too? Are we also doing evening?

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2017 3:24 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17

EPA Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17

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NTK Network: Exclusive AP Story Relied on EPA Intern and Disgruntled Employee

An Associated Press report regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) effort to secure 54 toxic Superfund sites that are in the path of Hurricane Irma relied on a former EPA intern and an employee who lied about why she left the agency as its sources. The story, which was titled, "AP Exclusive: Toxic sites in likely path of Irma," was written by Michael Bisecker and Jason Dearen, who painted Stephen Sweeney as "a former employee in EPA's office of policy." The Washington Examiner reported, however: "According to federal employment data,

Sweeney worked at the EPA for barely more than a year as an “Administration and Office Support Student Trainee.” People in less bureaucratic circles call that a paid internship.”

E&E News: House to debate EPA regional office closures

The House will weigh blocking any potential plans to cut or close U.S. EPA's regional offices this week as it completes work on a broad, fiscal 2018 spending package. The regional office proposal is one of a handful of remaining amendments to the Interior-EPA section of the appropriations bill, which would also fund the departments of Commerce, State, Justice, Transportation and Agriculture (E&E Daily, Sept. 5). The House is expected to pass the legislation this week, after delaying a vote late last week to focus on a Hurricane Harvey aid package (Greenwire, Sept. 8).

BNA: EPA Chief Pledges to Secure Toxic Sites in Irma's Storm Path

The Trump administration is applying lessons from Hurricane Harvey's drenching of southeast Texas as it secures toxic waste sites in the path of Hurricane Irma, U.S. environmental chief Scott Pruitt said. The Environmental Protection Agency's main goal is to make sure there are “enough people on the ground” to quickly assess the integrity of at-risk chemical sites and respond to needs as the monster storm moves through, Pruitt said. Technical staff already are working to secure about 80 Superfund sites in Irma's path from Miami to North Carolina, including a former pesticide plant, military base, and machine shop. “Operationally, we've tried to make sure we apply the same type of approach we used in Texas,” Pruitt, the EPA's administrator, said in a Sept. 7 interview. “Because of the area and the amount of population that's affected in Florida, we're trying to be even more aggressive.”

Reuters: US Coast Guard, EPA Cleaning up a Dozen Texas Chemical Spills After Harvey

The U.S. Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency are working with Texas state regulators to clean up oil and chemicals spilled from a dozen industrial facilities after flooding from Hurricane Harvey, authorities said. The spills came from oil refineries, fuel terminals and other businesses, but EPA spokeswoman Terri White said it was not possible to provide an estimate for the amounts spilled. “Initial reports were based on observation,” White said. “Some spills were already being cleaned up by the time EPA or other officials arrived to assess them and others had already migrated offsite.”

AG Week: EPA: Thumbs-up to 'energy beet' idea

The Environmental Protection Agency predicted it might take six months to do an initial evaluation of "energy beets" for their environmental footprint as a feedstock for biofuels. Six years — not months — later the agency has a thumbs up on energy beets as a feedstock — rating it for greenhouse gases and other environmental issues. Proponents say it's the first of three hurdles in making it accepted as a viable biofuel. Dave Ripplinger, a North Dakota State University bioenergy specialist, and Maynard Helgaas, an agricultural businessman who has been pushing the idea for eight years, say they're grateful for a positive report, despite the time lag, and look forward to the next phases that could finally create an industry that qualifies for the highest subsidies.

Delaware News Journal: EPA extends Delaware pollution waiver in attempt to lower gas prices

Responding to a 40-cent spike in gas prices, regulators on Friday gave Delaware fuel stations further permission to sell stockpiles of winter-blend gasoline. The move is "to ensure stability of the state's fuel supply in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey's impact on gas production in Texas, where five refineries remain shuttered," said Michael Globetti, spokesman for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, in a statement. Delaware saw some of the largest upward swings in gas prices nationally after Harvey pummeled the Texas Gulf Coast in August, and limited gasoline production at more than a dozen refineries.

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National Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17

Reuters: Mexico rescinds Texas aid offer after huge quake

Mexico has withdrawn its offer to aid victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas due to demands on its emergency services from a massive earthquake that struck late last week, the foreign ministry said in a statement on Monday. Mexico's government offered to send food, beds, generators, mobile kitchens as well as doctors after torrential rains from Harvey flooded vast parts of Houston. But the earthquake that struck southern Mexico on Thursday killed at least 96 people and left some 2.5 million people in need of aid. Hurricane Katia also hit the Gulf state of Veracruz this weekend and heavy rains have stretched emergency services.

Politico: Trump takes travel-ban exemption fight back to SCOTUS

The Trump administration is returning to the Supreme Court in an effort to overturn lower court rulings crimping the application of President Donald Trump's travel ban executive order. Justice Department lawyers asked the high court Monday to allow authorities to keep up a block on

many refugees covered by Trump's ban. However, the administration threw in the towel for now on efforts to insist that grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins of U.S. citizens be covered by the ban despite the Supreme Court ordering an exemption for close family members.

The Wall Street Journal: Dow Climbs Back Above 22000 as Fears Ease

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed back above 22000 for the first time in nearly a month, as investors' fears eased about North Korea and Hurricane Irma. Stocks rose broadly and haven assets retreated, a reversal from last week when major U.S. stock indexes, the dollar and Treasury yields fell as investors worried about worst-case scenarios from summer storms and threats from North Korea. The Dow industrials rose 266 points, or 1.2%, to 22063 in recent trading. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite jumped 1.1%.

TRUMP TWEETS

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/exclusive-ap-story-relied-on-epa-intern-and-disgruntled-employee/>

Exclusive AP Story Relied on EPA Intern and Disgruntled Employee

By: No author listed, 9/11/17, 2:03 p.m.

An Associated Press report regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) effort to secure 54 toxic Superfund sites that are in the path of Hurricane Irma relied on a former EPA intern and an employee who lied about why she left the agency as its sources.

The story, which was titled, "AP Exclusive: Toxic sites in likely path of Irma," was written by Michael Bisecker and Jason Dearen, who painted Stephen Sweeney as "a former employee in EPA's office of policy."

The Washington Examiner reported, however: "According to federal employment data, Sweeney worked at the EPA for barely more than a year as an "Administration and Office Support Student Trainee." People in less bureaucratic circles call that a paid internship."

The second source that the AP reporters used, Elizabeth Southerland, was formerly the director of science and technology in EPA's Office of Water. Southerland told the AP that EPA should do more "to quickly respond with careful monitoring after the storm."

The Washington Examiner also reported on why the AP citing Southerland was problematic:

"Like the intern, there's reason to doubt Southerland. After more than 30 years at the EPA, she reportedly quit in protest of budget cuts and Pruitt's leadership. But the decision had more to do with retirement than political protest. A Washington Free Beacon report found that Southerland was eligible for a pension."

"None of any of this disqualifies Southerland or Sweeney per se. They might well know some science things. But it's unsettling for a multinational news agency that's reprinted as journalism's gold standard. The AP should be able to find better sources than a biased analyst and an intern."

It appears that the AP's editorial standards are a little lax when it comes to publishing a piece that attacks the Trump administration.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060060215>

House to debate EPA regional office closures

By George Cahlink, 9/11/17

The House will weigh blocking any potential plans to cut or close U.S. EPA's regional offices this week as it completes work on a broad, fiscal 2018 spending package.

The regional office proposal is one of a handful of remaining amendments to the Interior-EPA section of the appropriations bill, which would also fund the departments of Commerce, State, Justice, Transportation and Agriculture (E&E Daily, Sept. 5).

The House is expected to pass the legislation this week, after delaying a vote late last week to focus on a Hurricane Harvey aid package (Greenwire, Sept. 8).

The EPA office amendment, offered by Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.), comes in response to speculation the agency could shutter some of its 10 regional branches.

Lawmakers' worries spiked earlier this year when an internal EPA budget hinted at closing some of the offices, but Administrator Scott Pruitt said no discussions are actually happening. This week will be the House's first chance to vote on the issue.

Polis acknowledged Pruitt's assurances last week but said his plan would make it much harder. The congressman noted EPA regional offices are at the forefront of disaster responses, like Harvey in Texas, and also address the "very real threat of climate change."

Other amendments

The House this week will also consider a proposal from Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.) to prohibit spending for enforcing an Obama administration EPA rule related to methane emissions. The Trump administration already has sought to block the rule, but that plan has run into resistance from the courts.

Mullin said on the floor last week that the methane rule is a "job-killing regulation" that will cost the economy \$530 million annually by limiting oil and gas operations.

Most Democrats are certain to oppose the amendment, seeing the rule as part of a broader push

to cap emissions that cause climate change.

Mullin and Rep. Scott Perry (R-Pa.) will also push an amendment that would prohibit funds from being used to measure the social cost of carbon. Mullin noted the House already has backed similar provisions 11 times in recent years.

Rep. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.) will get a vote on a proposal that would cut EPA funding by \$1.9 billion to \$5.6 billion, which he said would match the administration's request for the agency for fiscal 2018.

But the amendment may face bipartisan opposition as lawmakers have already resisted other proposals to make steep cuts to EPA funding in the bill.

Once the package is completed, the House will have finished all 12 fiscal 2018 spending bills, although the Senate has yet to pass any.

As a result, the recently approved Harvey aid measure extended current fiscal 2017 spending about three months beyond the start of the new fiscal year to Dec. 8 to buy members time to hammer out a final spending accord.

BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=120234427&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

EPA Chief Pledges to Secure Toxic Sites in Irma's Storm Path

By Jennifer A. Dlouhy, 9/11/17

The Trump administration is applying lessons from Hurricane Harvey's drenching of southeast Texas as it secures toxic waste sites in the path of Hurricane Irma, U.S. environmental chief

Scott Pruitt said.

The Environmental Protection Agency's main goal is to make sure there are “enough people on the ground” to quickly assess the integrity of at-risk chemical sites and respond to needs as the monster storm moves through, Pruitt said. Technical staff already are working to secure about 80 Superfund sites in Irma's path from Miami to North Carolina, including a former pesticide plant, military base, and machine shop.

“Operationally, we've tried to make sure we apply the same type of approach we used in Texas,” Pruitt, the EPA's administrator, said in a Sept. 7 interview. “Because of the area and the amount of population that's affected in Florida, we're trying to be even more aggressive.”

The EPA faced some criticism for its response to Hurricane Harvey in Texas, as it was not able to immediately inspect some toxic Superfund sites that were flooded or inaccessible. After chemicals at one plant exploded, spewing fumes into the air, the agency said an initial analysis showed “no high levels of toxic chemicals.” Earlier on Sept. 7, local police officers filed a lawsuit against the plant owners, Arkema SA, saying they were sickened by the fumes from the plant.

Nearly 200 EPA personnel were deployed in Texas. The agency has about 77 people working on Irma related efforts and another seven are on the way.

Back-to-back hurricanes hitting the U.S. threaten to strain the federal government's resources, prompting the Senate to pass a \$15.25 billion relief bill Sept. 7, and renewing a debate about the size and scope of federal agencies.

The Trump administration has proposed cutting nearly a third of the EPA's budget for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1 and culling roughly 3,200 employees from the agency's 15,000-member workforce, a process that has already begun as hundreds of workers accept buyouts.

Pruitt stressed that the EPA has not been hit by budget reductions yet, as Congress weighs how much to spend on the agency. Both Republican and Democratic lawmakers have signaled that

they will refuse to make the steep budget cuts President Donald Trump is seeking for EPA.

“Congress is working through the budget as we speak, so there's been no impact in that regard,” Pruitt said. “It's more of just simply allocating personnel and prioritizing personnel—making sure that at the end of the day it's the local officials and the state officials in partnership with the EPA.”

Reuters

<https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2017-09-11/us-coast-guard-epa-cleaning-up-a-dozen-texas-chemical-spills-after-harvey>

US Coast Guard, EPA Cleaning up a Dozen Texas Chemical Spills After Harvey

By Emily Flitter, 9/11/17

The U.S. Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency are working with Texas state regulators to clean up oil and chemicals spilled from a dozen industrial facilities after flooding from Hurricane Harvey, authorities said.

The spills came from oil refineries, fuel terminals and other businesses, but EPA spokeswoman Terri White said it was not possible to provide an estimate for the amounts spilled.

"Initial reports were based on observation," White said. "Some spills were already being cleaned up by the time EPA or other officials arrived to assess them and others had already migrated offsite."

Refineries owned by Valero Energy Corp in Houston, Motiva Inc in Port Arthur, and Exxon Mobile Corp in Baytown, were among the facilities that had reported spills, according to White. Representatives for those companies did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Officials also reported spills at Kinder Morgan Inc's Pasadena fuel storage terminal and at an oil terminal in Texas City owned by NuStar Energy LP.

Kinder Morgan spokeswoman Lexey Long said on Monday the company reported a spill of 500 barrels of gasoline on Aug. 27. Workers covered the spill with a foam blanket and set up a barrier to keep the public away.

"The spill has been fully remediated," she said.

NuStar representatives had no immediate comment.

Two wastewater treatment plants - Integrity Golden Triangle Marine Services of Port Arthur and San Jacinto River and Rail in Beaumont - also appeared on the list of spill response locations that EPA provided to Reuters.

San Jacinto River and Rail said it spilled a "foamy emulsion" when floodwaters overtopped the berms around its facility.

"Some is on our property and some is on adjacent property which has already been cleaned up," said spokesman Dennis Winkler. "We do not expect a long-term environmental impact. We do not expect there will be any air impact or health impacts."

Representatives from Integrity Golden Triangle did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The liquid spills come in addition to more than a million pounds of toxic emissions above legal limits that spewed from industrial facilities following Harvey, according to reports from companies filed with the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality.

The EPA and other authorities had warned people affected by the flood that waters could contain bacteria and toxic chemicals, but have said little yet about the specific origins or quantities of substances.

Residents in Baytown, where houses sit along the Houston Ship Channel next to several major refineries and chemical plants, said they were concerned about the impact of the spills and releases on health.

"I'm against the sword and the wall, what can I do?" said Carlos Caban, one of the residents, whose son had taken pictures of contaminated-looking floodwaters in nearby refinery site.

Several residents reported seeing a metallic sheen on water flowing near the plants during the heaviest flooding, posting videos to YouTube.

AG Week

<http://www.agweek.com/news/north-dakota/4324802-epa-thumbs-energy-beet-idea>

EPA: Thumbs-up to 'energy beet' idea

By Mikkel Pates, 9/11/17

The Environmental Protection Agency predicted it might take six months to do an initial evaluation of "energy beets" for their environmental footprint as a feedstock for biofuels.

Six years — not months — later the agency has a thumbs up on energy beets as a feedstock — rating it for greenhouse gases and other environmental issues. Proponents say it's the first of three hurdles in making it accepted as a viable biofuel.

Dave Ripplinger, a North Dakota State University bioenergy specialist, and Maynard Helgaas, an agricultural businessman who has been pushing the idea for eight years, say they're grateful for a positive report, despite the time lag, and look forward to the next phases that could finally create an industry that qualifies for the highest subsidies.

"This is a milestone in the commercialization of energy beets," Ripplinger says of the EPA's recent report.

The EPA decided to change the Renewable Fuels Standard in 2015, which reduced the momentum for advanced biofuel and cellulosic ethanol fuel. Every gallon of biofuel is given a 38-digit "RIN number" which is used to track the use of the fuels. Petroleum fuel marketers must blend biofuel ethanol into their fuel or buy the RINs.

High RIN goals

Standard corn ethanol recently has an 80- to 85-cent per gallon RIN value, while advanced biofuels are around \$1.10 per gallon, says Kyle Althoff, president of Equinox LLC, a biofuels and agribusiness consultant in Fargo. Cellulosic ethanol is more than \$2 per gallon.

Helgaas, 82, of West Fargo, is president of the Green Vision Group which has been studying the energy beet concept for eight years. The CVG looked at ten communities where a plant might be located and closely studied.

Energy beets produce C5 and C6 ethanol feedstock, which in turn produce aviation fuel and other products, including pharmaceuticals.

Blaine Schatz, the director of the NDSU Carrington Research and Extension Center, has worked with demonstration and testing plots in nine communities around the state, accumulating eight years of plot data. Besides the feedstock, the beets also have benefits for helping to rehabilitate soils that have become unproductive due to salts that have risen during high-water years.

Ripplinger was philosophical about the EPA delays. The agency received more applications than they expected and it took more computer modeling to complete the process, he says. He thinks it's just a coincidence that the energy beet proponents got an unofficial word that the initial process was completed in the first few weeks in the Trump administration.

Although North Dakota was an early proponent, Ripplinger says other energy beet projects across the country may be built first, noting California and Maryland projects have been proposed.

Helgaas says that in Europe 15 percent of the biofuels are from sugar beets, generally with significantly different breeding than for human consumption sugar. Syngenta and Betaseed are two breeding companies who already have developed seed for industrial beet breeding stock.

Delaware News Journal

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/2017/09/11/epa-extends-delaware-pollution-waiver-attempt-lower-gas-prices/652891001/>

EPA extends Delaware pollution waiver in attempt to lower gas prices

By Karl Baker, 9/11/17

Responding to a 40-cent spike in gas prices, regulators on Friday gave Delaware fuel stations further permission to sell stockpiles of winter-blend gasoline.

The move is "to ensure stability of the state's fuel supply in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey's impact on gas production in Texas, where five refineries remain shuttered," said Michael Globetti, spokesman for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, in a statement.

Delaware saw some of the largest upward swings in gas prices nationally after Harvey pummeled the Texas Gulf Coast in August, and limited gasoline production at more than a dozen refineries.

Outages in Texas affect gas stations across the country because more than half of U.S. refinery capacity is located near the Gulf Coast, according to the U.S. Energy Information Agency.

While gasoline futures, which are predictors of upcoming pump prices, have fallen since a spike after Harvey, retail prices in Delaware and nationally have not.

On Monday, a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline sold for \$2.68 in Delaware, up about 23 percent from Aug. 26, just days before Harvey made landfall, according to both AAA and Gasbuddy.com.

DNREC in late August first received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a statewide waiver to allow "regulated parties" to sell winter-blend gasoline through Sept. 15.

"Regulated parties would be the supply chain, from the refineries down to the distributor down to the corner WaWa or Royal Farms service station," Globetti said.

Federal Clean Air Act rules prohibit sale of the blend between May and September in order to minimize ozone pollution.

The gasoline evaporates at lower temperatures than summer varieties, and can be harmful to people with sensitive lungs during sunny days.

Friday's announcement extends the EPA waiver through Sept. 26.

Officials hope pump prices will drop in Delaware as more gallons of gasoline become available for sale.

A spokesman for PBF Energy, owners of the First State's sole refinery in Delaware City, did not immediately respond to a emailed question about the amount of winter blend gasoline the facility has stored.

Hurricane Irma's landfall in Florida over the weekend has not measurably impacted prices outside of state, which is not home to any major oil refinery. In anticipation of shortages in the Sunshine State, Homeland Security officials temporarily allowed foreign-flagged tankers to import gasoline into the area.

On Monday, traders bidding on the gasoline to be sold in October pushed its price down to pre-Harvey levels, indicating that Delaware prices at the pump will eventually follow suit.

Reuters

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/09/11/reuters-america-update-1-mexico-rescinds-texas-aid-offer-after-huge-quake.html> **Mexico rescinds Texas aid offer after huge quake**

By Reuters Staff, 9/11/17

Mexico has withdrawn its offer to aid victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas due to demands on its emergency services from a massive earthquake that struck late last week, the foreign ministry said in a statement on Monday.

Mexico's government offered to send food, beds, generators, mobile kitchens as well as doctors after torrential rains from Harvey flooded vast parts of Houston.

But the earthquake that struck southern Mexico on Thursday killed at least 96 people and left some 2.5 million people in need of aid. Hurricane Katia also hit the Gulf state of Veracruz this weekend and heavy rains have stretched emergency services.

"Given these circumstance, the Mexican government will channel all available logistical support to serve the families and communities affected in the national territory," the foreign ministry statement said.

U.S.-Mexican relations have been strained by U.S. President Donald Trump's threats to curtail trade with Latin America's No. 2 economy as well as his demand that Mexico pay for a border wall to keep out immigrants and drug traffickers.

The ministry noted that the U.S. embassy had taken nine days to respond to Mexico's formal offer of aid on Aug. 28, and said that "only certain logistical aid" was accepted.

The U.S. embassy in Mexico did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

While government aid never arrived, Mexico's volunteer Red Cross rushed food and supplies to storm refugees.

Mexican media highlighted that Trump had not spoken about the quake, which drew pledges of support from the pope and other world leaders, nor publicly acknowledged Mexico's aid offer.

The foreign ministry thanked Texas Governor Greg Abbott for sending messages of solidarity following the earthquake.

Separately, the ministry said Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray will travel to the United States this week to meet with local leaders and beneficiaries of a U.S. program protecting from deportation immigrants brought illegally into the United States as children.

Last week, Trump said he would end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program but delayed implementation until March to give Congress a chance to draft an

alternative.

More than three-fourths of the 800,000 immigrants enrolled in the DACA program are from Mexico.

Videgaray will travel to Sacramento and Los Angeles on Sept. 11-12 and then to Washington on Sept. 13, the ministry said, adding that he will meet with California Governor Jerry Brown and other officials.

Politico

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/11/trump-takes-travel-ban-exemptions-fight-back-to-scotus-242557>

Trump takes travel-ban exemption fight back to SCOTUS

By Josh Gerstein, 9/11/17

The Trump administration is returning to the Supreme Court in an effort to overturn lower court rulings crimping the application of President Donald Trump's travel ban executive order.

Justice Department lawyers asked the high court Monday to allow authorities to keep up a block on many refugees covered by Trump's ban.

However, the administration threw in the towel for now on efforts to insist that grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins of U.S. citizens be covered by the ban despite the Supreme Court ordering an exemption for close family members.

A federal judge in Hawaii ruled against the federal government on both issues in July. Last week, a 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals panel declined to disturb that ruling.

The dispute taken to the justices Monday addresses how much of the travel ban can be enforced until the Supreme Court rules on the broader issues. The justices are scheduled to hear arguments Oct. 10 on a pair of cases related to the ban.

At issue are about 24,000 refugees who have been assigned to U.S. refugee resettlement agencies but not yet given final approval to depart for the U.S.

U.S. District Court Judge Derrick Watson agreed with the State of Hawaii and refugee advocates that the assignment to an American agency was a sufficient connection to a U.S. entity to qualify for the temporary travel-ban reprieve the Supreme Court ordered in June when it agreed to decide the broader legality of the travel ban.

Justice Department lawyers argued against that interpretation, noting that it would fill the pipeline for refugee applicants and essentially nullify the partial stay the high court granted in June in an apparent compromise.

"The Ninth Circuit's decision renders the June 26 stay functionally inoperative," Acting Solicitor General Jeff Wall argued in the filing Monday. "It makes no sense to exempt from....the Order the roughly 24,000 refugees for whom assurances exist, based on the happenstance that they had reached a later stage of the administrative process in which the government routinely obtains assurances."

Justice Anthony Kennedy issued a temporary stay Monday afternoon that essentially freezes the status quo. Without such an action, Watson's order would have kicked in Tuesday, with the administration required to dramatically increase its admission of refugees.

Kennedy ordered Hawaii's attorneys to respond by noon Tuesday and said the temporary stay will remain in place pending further order from him or the full court.

The revised travel ban Trump issued in March suspends issuance of U.S. visas to residents of six majority-Muslim countries for 90 days and halts admission of refugees from across the globe for 120 days.

Those clocks, which began running in late June, may have contributed to the administration's decision to give up on enforcing the travel ban against the broader set of relatives given a reprieve by the lower courts. Due to court rulings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins have been immune from the ban for the past couple of months, so those seeking visas may have been aware of the legal fight and have already gotten them.

And with the six-country visa ban set to run out Sept. 24, few visa applicants would be affected even if the courts narrowed the family exemption.

In the Monday filing, Wall noted that the Supreme Court previously declined a request from the federal government to block the family-related aspect of Watson's order. "In addition, the lower courts' line-drawing error in that regard is less stark than their nullification of both the Order's refugee provisions and this Court's stays permitting implementation of those provisions," he wrote as he explained why the family issue was being dropped.

Thousands of refugees could be impacted if the lower court rulings kick in, although the timing there is also uncertain. Refugee admissions are capped by fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30. Trump could try to block or reduce the admission of refugees after that date by setting that allocation to zero or a low figure.

Obama had set the cap for this year at 110,000, although for budget and capacity reasons a much lower number of refugees were actually expected to be admitted. Trump attempted to lower the cap to 50,000 for this year, but court rulings have effectively blocked that move.

The global refugee halt in Trump's revised executive order runs out in late October, about two weeks after the scheduled oral arguments at the high court. A ruling in the president's favor could empower him to reinstate or extend the travel ban orders or to implement something similar on a permanent basis.

It's also possible that the administration could try to scuttle the legal dispute by declaring the issues moot as a result of the expiration of the key provisions of Trump's orders

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/global-markets-rise-after-quiet-weekend-1505097744>

Dow Climbs Back Above 22000 as Fears Ease

By Marina Force and Corrie Driebush, 9/11/17

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed back above 22000 for the first time in nearly a month, as investors' fears eased about North Korea and Hurricane Irma.

Stocks rose broadly and haven assets retreated, a reversal from last week when major U.S. stock indexes, the dollar and Treasury yields fell as investors worried about worst-case scenarios from summer storms and threats from North Korea.

The Dow industrials rose 266 points, or 1.2%, to 22063 in recent trading. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite jumped 1.1%.

The last time the blue-chip index closed above 22000 was Aug. 16 and it hasn't posted a 1% gain since April.

Some analysts had expected North Korea to conduct a weapons test on Saturday, coinciding with the country's founding day, as it did last year to mark the celebration. The absence of news from Pyongyang supported stocks and the dollar, while weighing on haven assets, analysts say.

Government bond prices declined, pushing up yields. The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury

note rose to 2.129% in recent trading, according to Tradeweb, compared with Friday's close of 2.058%.

Many analysts don't expect this relative calm to last, however, and bond yields could decrease if North Korea tensions rise once again.

Meanwhile, concerns about Hurricane Irma's impact on the U.S. economy also decreased. A reduction in the storm's strength and a shift in its forecast course—there was no direct hit on Miami—meant insured damage estimates were likely to be less than originally anticipated by some analysts.

Reinsurance companies, which tumbled last week as they were expected to bear the financial brunt of Hurricane Irma's damage, jumped on Monday. Shares of Everest Re Group, which dropped more than 10% last week, rose 4.7% in recent trading. Chubb rose 3.8% and XL Group climbed 5.2%.

The WSJ Dollar Index, which measures the U.S. dollar against a basket of other currencies, rose 0.6%, after sinking to its lowest level in more than two years on Friday. The euro fell 0.6% against the greenback, paring some of last week's gains, to trade at \$1.1961.

The Stoxx Europe 600 rose 1%, boosted by gains in bank, insurance and technology shares—sectors that tend to gain when investors feel confident enough to take on more risk.

Gold, another traditional haven for money managers, fell 1%. The yen and the Swiss franc, which traditionally rise when markets are volatile, both fell against the U.S. dollar.

A weaker yen boosted Japanese blue-chip stocks. Japan's Nikkei Stock Average rose 1.4%, after setting fresh four-month lows on Friday and logging its worst week in seven months.

South Korea's Kospi added 0.7%, and Australia's S&P/200 rose 0.7%.

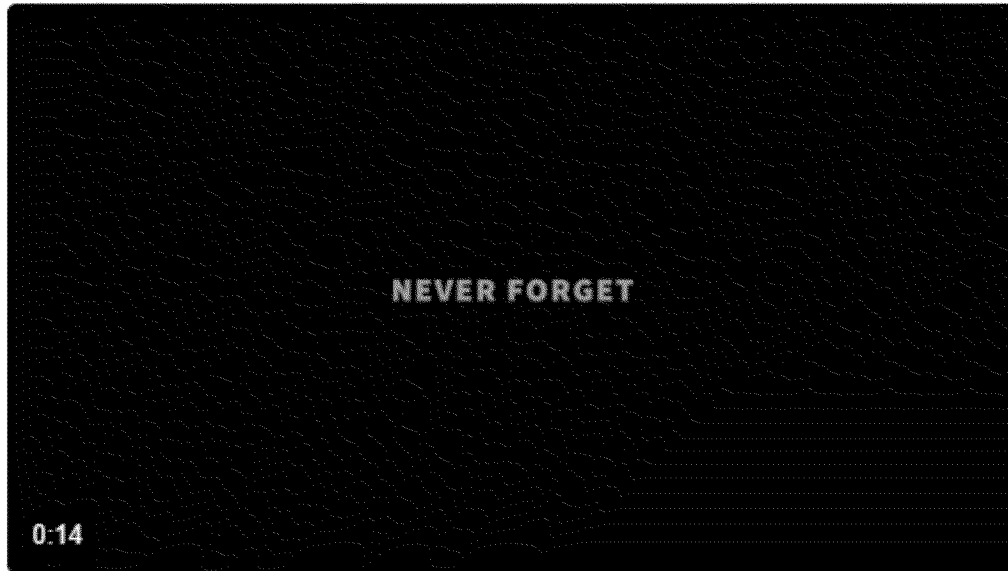
TRUMP TWEETS





Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 26m

May God Forever Bless the United States of America. #NeverForget911



💬 2.2K ↺ 5.3K ❤️ 17K ✉

James Hewitt

Environmental Protection Agency

Special Advisor for Public Affairs

(202) 578-6141

Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 10/4/2017 6:20:06 PM
Subject: Definers

What is the status on this? Ryan just asked for us to pull tv clips and we still don't have Definers who can provide this service to us.

Let's get this done!

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Thur 7/27/2017 11:58:05 AM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle: HEALTH CARE VOTE-A-RAMA TONIGHT – Trump threatens Alaska over Murkowski vote – SANCTIONS BILL CRISIS AVERTED – Scalise leaves hospital for rehab

07/27/2017 07:56 AM EDT

By Heather Caygle (hcaygle@politico.com or [@heatherscope](https://twitter.com/heatherscope))

BRING EXTRA SNACKS TODAY and wear your comfy shoes, Huddle readers. It'll be a long night in both the House and Senate as the lower chamber tries to wrap up work on a multi-bill spending package and senators kick off a vote-a-rama related to the GOP's Obamacare repeal.

VOTE-A-RAMA DRAMA - Senate Republican leaders still don't have the votes to pass some kind of anti-Obamacare bill this week, despite pushing a bare-bones repeal that avoids divisive issues like Medicaid cuts but leaves key centrists and conservatives undecided. So far Senate Republicans have rejected both the GOP's repeal-and-replace plan and a repeal-only bill. GOP leaders are aiming for a final vote, likely on their "skinny repeal," tomorrow following a long night of unlimited amendments known as the vote-a-rama. Burgess, Jen Haberkorn and Seung Min: <http://politi.co/2u1idQA>

-Related: CBO: 'Skinny' repeal could boost uninsured by 16 million, Dan Diamond reports.

Meanwhile, Senate Democrats say they're done offering amendments until Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) unveils the GOP's ultimate repeal plan. "It's not that Democrats aren't ready to go for a vote-a-rama with an arsenal of amendments," Seung Min reports. "But Democratic senators say they see no point in offering up their proposals if they're amending what they say is a shell of a health care bill. 'This is a joke, and we're not going to participate anymore,' said Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.)." More: <http://politi.co/2u1u6pN>

Not so fast, the House says: House Republicans are eyeing the Senate's skinny repeal plan warily. First, the possibility of a House-Senate conference to hash out differences means the health care debate could drag on for months, further delaying other parts of the GOP's agenda. Second, House leaders already forced members to take a tough vote on their repeal plan that the Senate is refusing to support, potentially putting GOP lawmakers in political jeopardy in November 2018. Bres and Jen report from the House: <http://politi.co/2u1mkMU>

Juicy read: Don't miss this scoop from Erica Martinson about how the Trump administration threatened Alaska after Sen. Lisa Murkowski voted against starting debate on health care. By Wednesday afternoon, "each of Alaska's two Republican senators had received a phone call from Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke letting them know the vote had put Alaska's future with the administration in jeopardy," she reports. "I'm not going to go into the details, but I fear that the strong economic growth, pro-energy, pro-mining, pro-jobs and personnel from Alaska who are part of those policies are going to stop," Sen. Dan Sullivan said. More from the Alaska Dispatch News: <http://bit.ly/2tMjkZe>

WARNING SHOTS FIRED: BACK OFF THE AG - Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) fired off a warning seemingly aimed at President Donald Trump Wednesday, saying the panel's schedule is set for the rest of the year and they have no plans to confirm another attorney general. Grassley's [tweet](#) came just after [the Washington Post reported](#) Trump has mused about replacing Attorney General Jeff Sessions with a recess appointment (sidestepping Senate confirmation) during the August break. The Senate can block recess appointments by not formally adjourning during the break.

With friends like these: Sessions' allies on Capitol Hill and in the conservative world continued their drumbeat of support Wednesday. "He's trying to get Sessions to quit and I hope Sessions doesn't quit," Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said about Trump's tweets and statements criticizing the AG and calling him "weak." Josh Gerstein and Josh Dawsey: <http://politi.co/2u11I7t>

TAKE ON THURSDAY, Y'ALL. Welcome to July 27 and thanks for tuning into POLITICO's Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill.

WEDNESDAY'S MOST CLICKED: Paul Demko's [story](#) on what could happen next in the Senate's Obamacare repeal effort won Wednesday.

SANCTIONS CRISIS AVERTED - After a day of last-minute GOP jousting over the Russia, Iran and North Korea sanctions bill, a deal has been reached that will likely send the bill to the president's desk before August recess. "The House has committed to expeditiously consider and pass enhancements to the North Korea language, which multiple members of the Senate hope to make in the very near future," Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) said Thursday night. Earlier in the day, Corker rattled House negotiators by saying he planned to strip the North Korea language out, which leaders in the lower chamber feared could delay the bill's passage until September. Elana with the play-by-play: <http://politi.co/2u0Wt7J>

White House reacts: WH communications director Anthony Scaramucci said on CNN this morning Trump may veto the sanctions bill, implying it isn't tough enough on Russia. Remember, Congress beat back attempts from the White House to water down the bill. Also, the sanctions package is overwhelmingly supported in Congress, meaning lawmakers could easily override the president's veto.

THE TUESDAY GROUP FLEXES ITS MUSCLE - For years, centrist House Republicans like the Tuesday Group have been dutiful backers of whatever plan House leadership is pushing. But after watching the rabble-rousing Freedom Caucus bigfoot the agenda time and again, the centrist pack is starting to flex some muscle. The group has left its mark in recent months, including resisting the initial GOP Obamacare repeal, sinking controversial amendments on transgender troops and Islam and scuttling a plan to pass a massive, partisan spending package. But the get-tough approach further complicates things for Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and his team, who "find themselves twisted in knots trying to find 218 votes to pass almost anything of consequence," Rachael reports. More: <http://politi.co/2tMld8w>

OLD PALS CATCHING UP - Mark Meredith grabbed this pic of Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.) hanging out with John Boehner at Trattoria Alberto, a Capitol

Hill Italian joint that's a favorite of the former House speaker. See the pic: <http://bit.ly/2u16xgS>

THE INSIDE STORY ON WH TRANSGENDER BAN - House GOP leaders had a problem: The spending package they were bringing to the floor with funding for Trump's border wall this week seemed headed for defeat due to internal fighting over transgender troops. So they asked the White House to help settle a dispute over whether the Pentagon should pay for gender reassignment surgery. Except Trump took it much further Wednesday, announcing on Twitter - without giving Congress a heads up - that he was banning transgender troops from serving in the military.

Quote du jour: "This is like someone told the White House to light a candle on the table and the WH set the whole table on fire," said one senior House Republican aide. Rachael and Josh Dawsey with much more: <http://politi.co/2tDcOA4>

Many Republicans did not respond warmly to Trump's plan, with folks like Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst, a military vet, saying gender is not an indicator of someone's military prowess. "Americans who are qualified and can meet the standards to serve in the military should be afforded that opportunity," a spokesman for Ernst said. Burgess with more: <http://politi.co/2tDcOA4>

SCALISE TRANSITIONING TO REHAB - House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) was released from the hospital Tuesday and will now transition to an "intensive inpatient rehabilitation," his doctors said in a statement. Rachael with more: <http://politi.co/2tDBzvZ>

PROFILE DU JOUR: JEFF FLAKE - "The Arizona Republican is betting his Senate seat on the political appeal of decency-but can that pay off in Trump's America?" McKay Coppins writes for the Atlantic after trailing Flake around the Grand Canyon State. "He sometimes seems as if he has just crash-landed here in a time machine from some bygone era of seersucker suits and polite disagreements. In today's climate of staged presidential beheadings, and reporter body-slammings, and senatorial f-bomb-dropping, the gentleman from Arizona seems altogether uncomfortable." Much more: <http://theatl.n.tc/2tMm35a>

DEPARTURE LOUNGE - Lauren Huston (*née* Hammond) will be leaving her gig at the Senate Commerce Committee to pursue her J.D. full time at Catholic University. **Brianna Manzelli** has been named press secretary and digital director for the committee, coming from the press team at the RNC.

TODAY IN CONGRESS - The House meets at 10 a.m. with first votes at 1:30 p.m. and last votes around 9 p.m. Today's agenda: <http://bit.ly/2u0XaxC>. **The Senate** gavels in at 10 a.m. with a 2:15 p.m. vote relate to the GOP's Obamacare repeal and a vote-a-rama expected to start tonight.

AROUND THE HILL - Comedian Adam Carolla will testify with others about free speech on college campuses during a House Oversight subcommittee hearing led by Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) starting at 9 a.m. in 2154 Rayburn.

House Education Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) and Reps. Bradley Byrne (R-Ala.), Tim Walberg (R-Mich.), and Henry Cuellar (D-Texas) hold a 10 a.m. press conference in the House triangle on joint-employer legislation, a bill backed by the National Restaurant Association.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi holds her weekly press conference at 10:45 a.m. in HVC Studio A. **Pelosi** and other House Democrats celebrate the 52nd anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid at 11 a.m. in HVC 215.

Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) holds his weekly press conference at 11:30 a.m. in HVC Studio A. **Reps. John Larson (D-Conn.), Brian Higgins (D-N.Y.) and Joe Courtney (D-Conn.)** hold a press conference on Medicare at 11:30 a.m. in 234 Cannon.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) and other House Judiciary Democrats hold a press conference on President Trump and the ongoing federal Russia probe at 2 p.m. in HVC Studio B.

WEDNESDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER - Dan Cohen was the first to guess that Rep. Edith Nourse Rogers, the first woman elected to Congress from Massachusetts, received the first pen after the signing of the original GI bill in 1944.

TODAY'S TRIVIA - Dan with today's question: This presidential candidate appeared on all 50 states ballots, quit the race mid-summer before returning to the campaign trail and still had an impact on this election. Who was the candidate, why did he quit the race and what was the main impact of his candidacy on the race? The first person to correctly answer gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send answers my way: hcaygle@politico.com

GET HUDDLE [emailed to your phone](#) each morning.

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/huddle/2017/07/27/politico-huddle-health-care-vote-a-rama-tonight-trump-threatens-alaska-over-murkowski-vote-sanctions-bill-crisis-averted-scalise-leaves-hospital-for-rehab-221552>

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thur 9/28/2017 10:33:31 PM
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

Hi Jahan

Can you forward me the screen shot so I can send it to contracts thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 6:27 PM
To: Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

Great. Adding Nancy and Liz.

On Sep 28, 2017, at 4:11 PM, Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com> wrote:

We're fully registered...

<Screen Shot 2017-09-28 at 4.23.59 PM.png>

On Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 3:29 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

HI –

Working with contracts on this – here is the remaining issue that the contracting officer brought to me yesterday --

Specifically, the vendor is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). In order for any vendor to receive a contract from the federal government, they must be registered in this system. The vendor seems to be reluctant to register.

George had been working with the vendor on this. I have a call into the vendor as they may need assistance in completing the forms.

Will update you as soon as I hear from the vendor.

Thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:02 PM
To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers -- Clips
Importance: High

Where are we on this and when can we get this going? Today is a day where we could really use their help capturing clips in real time. This is very important and our wait and the process to do this has been way too long. Thank you!

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definerscorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Wed 11/1/2017 1:06:19 AM
Subject: DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2017

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 31, 2017

**DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2017**

In the morning, President Donald J. Trump will receive his daily intelligence briefing. The President will then hold a Cabinet Meeting. In the afternoon, the President will sign the National Veterans and Military Families Month Proclamation. The President will then have lunch with Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and Secretary of Defense James Mattis. Later in the afternoon, the President will meet with the Chairwoman of the Republican National Committee. The President will then sign H.J. Res. 111 – Disapproving of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s Arbitration Agreements Rule.

In-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: CBS

Print: McClatchy

Radio: AURN

EDT

9:00AM In-Town Travel Pool Call Time

11:00AM THE PRESIDENT receives his daily intelligence briefing

Oval Office

Closed Press

11:30AM THE PRESIDENT holds a Cabinet Meeting

Cabinet Room

In-House Pool Spray (Final Gather 11:20AM – Briefing Room Doors)

**12:30PM THE PRESIDENT signs the National Veterans and Military
Families Month Proclamation**

Oval Office

Closed Press

12:35PM THE PRESIDENT has lunch with Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and Secretary of Defense James Mattis

Private Dining Room

Closed Press

2:00PM THE PRESIDENT meets with the Chairwoman of the Republican National Committee

Oval Office

Closed Press

3:30PM THE PRESIDENT signs H.J. Res. 111 – Disapproving of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s Arbitration Agreements Rule

Oval Office

Closed Press

Briefing Schedule

2:30PM Press Briefing with Press Secretary Sarah Sanders

White House Briefing Room

On Camera

###

[Unsubscribe](#)

The White House · 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW · Washington DC 20500 · 202-456-1111

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: John Siciliano
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:54:01 PM
Subject: media question

Do you have a response to Definers canceling their contract with EPA?

To: Fimrite, Peter[PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 2/9/2018 7:15:15 PM
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Can I update this answer regarding the 10 percent cut.

Q: I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief

On-The-Record Response: **“No, this is not accurate.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 1:15 PM
To: 'Fimrite, Peter' <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

I will call you but below is an on-the-record statement regarding 10 percent cut question:

I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief

“Decisions on office reductions, if needed, will be made based on the final FY2018 budget.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 12:58 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these

answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every employee, to EPA’s Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words “climate change” were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **“Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focused on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **“Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory**

certainty.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **“No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **“We don’t discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9 Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox

EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: @pfimrite

To: Emily Holden[eholden@politico.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:57:12 PM
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

Definers was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor.

From: Emily Holden [mailto:eholden@politico.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:51 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

So you're saying that you ended the contract because Definers was too expensive? Because they're saying they were becoming a distraction because of the news stories.

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](https://www.instagram.com/emilyhholden)

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:43 PM
To: Emily Holden <eholden@politico.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that

can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Emily Holden [<mailto:eholden@politico.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:28 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers contract?

Is it true EPA is ending the contract?

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](#)

To: Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Mon 8/14/2017 8:45:26 PM
Subject: FOR APPROVAL: EPA Evening News Highlights 8.14.17
EPA Evening News Highlights 8.14.17.docx

EPA Evening News Highlights 8.14.17

NTK Network: Report: Obama EPA Paid Unearned Overtime To Employees

A new report from the EPA Inspector General has shown that the Obama-era agency approved unearned overtime payments to its employees in at least one administrative region. According to the report, there were 79 instances of EPA employees receiving overtime pay that exceeded the agency's bi-weekly overtime cap in the Pacific Northwest. Most of the 79 exceedances lacked a supporting waiver request; Region 10 provided 15 waiver requests that covered only 21 of the 79 instances. The OIG's review of the 15 waiver requests showed that requests cited both emergencies and work that was critical to the mission of the agency as justification.

Politico: EPA To Revamp 2015 Power Plant Discharges Rule

EPA will conduct a new rulemaking to "potentially revise" portions of a 2015 regulation limiting toxic discharges from coal-fired power plants, according to a letter sent by Administrator Scott Pruitt to the U.S. Small Business Administration Friday and obtained by POLITICO today. The 2015 rule set new technology-based limits on heavy metals like mercury and arsenic that power plants discharge into waterways. The previous limits had not been updated in more than 30 years.

The Washington Examiner: EPA Chief, A Former Baseball Exec, Wants 'World, World Series'

President Trump's EPA chief has an idea that is sure to stir up a world debate. And it has nothing to do with the climate. Instead, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, former co-owner of Major League Baseball's AAA club in Oklahoma City, is calling for an international world series. In Iowa and appearing on WHO TV, Pruitt played along with a host's rapid-fire "Quick Six" questions, one of which was how baseball can be improved. Pruitt, who won a reputation as a marketing genius for his former Oklahoma City Redhawks, said: I think we need to do more to export the product internationally. There's such a hunger and desire in Asia particularly. We need to work on that.

E&E News: Greens launch legal war on EPA's TSCA rules

Several green groups launched a legal campaign last week against the Trump administration over a pair of rules issued by U.S. EPA under the nation's new chemicals law. Last year, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, a reform to the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act. It requires EPA to conduct risk assessments of chemicals without regard to cost and to protect vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women. At issue in the litigation are EPA's framework rules for the new law. One of them established the process and criteria for identifying high-priority chemicals for risk evaluations, while the other established the system for determining if the chemicals present an unreasonable risk to health or the environment. The administration issued final versions in June. "The activities we are announcing today demonstrate this administration's commitment to providing regulatory certainty to American businesses, while protecting human health and the environment," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said at the time.

E&E News: FERC's Chatterjee Vows To Support Coal, Nuclear

In his first substantive public remarks since being named chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission last week, Neil Chatterjee talked up the importance of coal and "baseload power." In the comments, part of an official FERC podcast called "Open Access," Chatterjee said his first priority will be to get started on an accumulated backlog of orders. "I heard about it all through the Senate confirmation process. There's a lot of consternation out there, and I'm committed to working with my colleagues to get after it right away," Chatterjee said.

National Evening News Highlights 8.14.17

The Washington Post: Trump Denounces KKK, Neo-Nazis As 'Repugnant' As He Seeks To Quell Criticism Of His Response To Charlottesville

President Trump denounced the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis by name Monday, declaring racist hate groups "repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans," as he sought to tamp down mounting criticism of his response to the killing of a counterprotester at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville over the weekend. "Anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable," Trump said in brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, where he returned after a week of vacation in

Bedminster, N.J. “We condemn in the strongest possible terms the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence. It has no place in America.”

The Wall Street Journal: Trump Signs Order Increasing Trade Pressure On China

President Donald Trump took a step Monday in his effort to ramp up trade pressure on China, directing aides to explore the prospect of sanctioning Beijing for the “unfair” acquisition of American high technology. The directive, signed in a ceremony in the White House’s Diplomatic Reception Room, was the first formal China trade action taken by a president who has long blasted the country for improperly aggressive commercial practices. “The theft of intellectual property by foreign countries costs our nation millions of jobs and billions and billions of dollars each and every year,” Mr. Trump said. “For too long this wealth has been drained from our country while Washington has done nothing.”

The Washington Post: Trump Fires Back After The CEO Of Merck Resigned From His Manufacturing Council

The chief executive of Merck said Monday in a tweet that he was resigning from President Trump's manufacturing council, saying he was doing so “as CEO of Merck and as a matter of personal conscience” and that “America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy, which run counter to the American ideal that all people are created equal.”

Politico: Obama Team Was Warned In 2014 About Russian Interference

The Obama administration received multiple warnings from national security officials between 2014 and 2016 that the Kremlin was ramping up its intelligence operations and building disinformation networks it could use to disrupt the U.S. political system, according to more than half a dozen current and former officials. As early as 2014, the administration received a report that quoted a well-connected Russian source as saying that the Kremlin was building a disinformation arm that could be used to interfere in Western democracies. The report, according to an official familiar with it, included a quote from the Russian source telling U.S. officials in Moscow, “You have no idea how extensive these networks are in Europe ... and in the U.S., Russia has penetrated media organizations, lobbying firms, political parties, governments and militaries in all of these places.”

NO TRUMP TWEETS

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/report-obama-epa-paid-uneared-overtime-to-employees/>

Report: Obama EPA Paid Uneared Overtime To Employees

By NTK Staff, 8/14/17

A new report from the EPA Inspector General has shown that the Obama-era agency approved uneared overtime payments to its employees in at least one administrative region.

According to the report, there were 79 instances of EPA employees receiving overtime pay that exceeded the agency's bi-weekly overtime cap in the Pacific Northwest:

Most of the 79 exceedances lacked a supporting waiver request; Region 10 provided 15 waiver requests that covered only 21 of the 79 instances. The OIG's review of the 15 waiver requests showed that requests cited both emergencies and work that was critical to the mission of the agency as justification.

These 15 approvals also lacked the proper justification, the Inspector General wrote.

Furthermore, there appeared to be no mechanisms to prevent such abuses of overtime payroll:

Based on interviews with officials and personnel, we learned that there is no clear line of responsibility to maintain documentation for waiver requests or to track requests and approvals between the region, OARM and OCFO. Neither OARM nor OCFO could provide a list of waivers for the period requested or supporting documentation.

This isn't the first time that the EPA under Scott Pruitt's leadership has moved to end the luxurious waste of taxpayer dollars at the agency. In June, Pruitt ended a \$1 million employee fitness center program, after reports of waste came in from national offices.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/08/epa-to-revamp-2015-power-plant-discharges-rule-091780>

EPA To Revamp 2015 Power Plant Discharges Rule

By Annie Snider, 8/14/17

EPA will conduct a new rulemaking to "potentially revise" portions of a 2015 regulation limiting toxic discharges from coal-fired power plants, according to a letter sent by Administrator Scott Pruitt to the U.S. Small Business Administration Friday and obtained by POLITICO today. The 2015 rule set new technology-based limits on heavy metals like mercury and arsenic that power plants discharge into waterways. The previous limits had not been updated in more than 30 years.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-chief-a-former-baseball-exec-wants-world-world-series/article/2631464>

EPA chief, a former baseball exec, wants 'world, world series'

By: Paul Bedard, 8/14/17, 1:37 p.m.

President Trump's EPA chief has an idea that is sure to stir up a world debate.

And it has nothing to do with the climate.

Instead, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, former co-owner of Major League Baseball's AAA club in Oklahoma City, is calling for an international world series.

In Iowa and appearing on WHO TV, Pruitt played along with a host's rapid-fire "Quick Six" questions, one of which was how baseball can be improved.

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I think we need to do more to export the product internationally. There's such a hunger and desire in Asia particularly. We need to work on that.

I think baseball is one of those sports we can actually truly have a world series, we can have a world competition. We've seen it in other instances and I think that's an opportunity that we need to be pursuing.

Pruitt, who sold his stake in the team after being elected Oklahoma attorney general in 2010, ended the interview with a prediction: The Chicago Cubs will win the World Series "again in the next five years."

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/08/14/stories/1060058755>

Greens launch legal war on EPA's TSCA rules

Amanda Reilly, 8/14/17

Several green groups launched a legal campaign last week against the Trump administration over a pair of rules issued by U.S. EPA under the nation's new chemicals law.

Environmentalists filed lawsuits Thursday and Friday in at least three federal appellate courts around the country seeking review of the rules, which EPA issued in June to guide risk evaluations and prioritization of chemical substances.

The new standards "leave the public at risk from chemicals commonly found in our homes, schools and workplaces," said Richard Denison, lead scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund, one of the plaintiffs.

"Our legal challenges seek to hold EPA to the law and ensure that the public is protected as Congress intended," Denison said.

Last year, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, a reform to the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act.

It requires EPA to conduct risk assessments of chemicals without regard to cost and to protect vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women.

At issue in the litigation are EPA's framework rules for the new law. One of them established the process and criteria for identifying high-priority chemicals for risk evaluations, while the other established the system for determining if the chemicals present an unreasonable risk to health or the environment. The administration issued final versions in June.

"The activities we are announcing today demonstrate this administration's commitment to providing regulatory certainty to American businesses, while protecting human health and the environment," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said at the time (E&E News PM, June 22).

"The new process for evaluating existing chemicals outlined in these rules will increase public confidence in chemical safety without stifling innovation," he said.

2nd and 4th circuits

In their lawsuits, the environmental groups accuse EPA under the new Trump administration of unlawfully weakening the rules.

EDF, which filed its lawsuit in the New York-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, said EPA reversed the position taken during the Obama administration that it must consider all of the conditions for use of a given chemical substance.

The final rule stated that the agency may "exclude certain activities that EPA has determined to be conditions of use" from its risk analysis.

In a blog post, the Natural Resources Defense Council said it opposes the new rules because they give EPA "nearly unlimited discretion" to determine which uses of a chemical it considers to determine whether a substance is unsafe.

The resulting "incomplete analysis is likely to be wrong and could lead EPA to conclude that a chemical does not pose an unreasonable risk when it actually does," NRDC senior attorney Daniel Rosenberg and senior scientist Jennifer Sass wrote in the post.

NRDC, together with the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments and Cape Fear River Watch, sued EPA over the rules in the Virginia-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

9th Circuit

Separately, Earthjustice filed a complaint Thursday in the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of the Environmental Working Group, WE ACT for Environmental Justice, the Learning Disabilities Association of America, the United Steelworkers, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Environmental Health Strategy Center and the Sierra Club.

Labor unions joined the groups, as did Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families; the Vermont Public Interest Research Group; and the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization.

The latter trio of groups is represented by Robert Sussman, a top EPA official in the Obama and Clinton administrations who has warned that the Trump administration may back down from last year's compromise reform law (Greenwire, July 20).

In statements announcing the lawsuits, groups blamed the president's choice of Nancy Beck to serve as the top political official in EPA's chemical safety office for the changes.

Prior to joining the administration, Beck was the senior director of regulatory science policy at the American Chemistry Council, a chemical industry trade group that generally opposes stricter regulations.

"The EPA's newly adopted rules — overseen by a former high-level chemical industry official with head-spinning conflicts of interest — will leave children, communities and workers vulnerable to dangerous chemicals," Earthjustice attorney Eve Gartner said in a statement.

"This lawsuit is about one thing: holding the Trump EPA to the letter of the law and ensuring it fulfills its mandate to protect the public," she said.

Beck has pushed back against greens' concerns about her appointment (Greenwire, July 17).

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/08/14/stories/1060058757>

FERC's Chatterjee Vows To Support Coal, Nuclear

Sam Mintz, 8/14/17

In his first substantive public remarks since being named chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission last week, Neil Chatterjee talked up the importance of coal and "baseload power."

In the comments, part of an official FERC podcast called "Open Access," Chatterjee said his first priority will be to get started on an accumulated backlog of orders.

"I heard about it all through the Senate confirmation process. There's a lot of consternation out there, and I'm committed to working with my colleagues to get after it right away," Chatterjee said.

Millions of dollars of infrastructure, including major natural gas pipelines, has been in limbo since FERC Chairman Norman Bay resigned in February, leaving the body without a quorum and unable to give final approvals.

Chatterjee also said he wanted to focus on ensuring the reliability and resilience of the electric system — specifically by supporting "baseload" coal and power plants.

"I believe that generation, including our existing coal and nuclear fleet, need to be properly compensated to recognize the value they provide to the system," he said.

The former aide to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) was particularly vocal about coal. "I'm a Kentucky native. I've seen firsthand throughout my life how important a contribution coal makes to an affordable and reliable electric system," he said.

"Last year, coal provided over 80 percent of the electricity in Kentucky," he said. "As a nation, we need to ensure that coal, along with gas and renewables, continue to be part of our diverse fuel mix."

The comments align with the premise that Energy Secretary Rick Perry gave when ordering a controversial study of the electric grid: that coal and nuclear plants are essential for the grid's reliability.

Progressive and environmental groups — and many independent experts — have challenged that concept, arguing it is possible to maintain stability even while continuing to use more renewables like wind and solar, and less coal (Greenwire, July 11).

Chatterjee, who was sworn in to the commission last week along with former Pennsylvania regulator Robert Powelson, is holding the gavel only on an interim basis. Jones Day energy lawyer Kevin McIntyre will take over if and when confirmed.

McIntyre and another nominee, Democratic Senate aide Richard Glick, are scheduled to face the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee for a confirmation hearing Sept. 7.

The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/08/14/trump-denounces-kkk-neo-nazis-as-justice-department-launches-civil-rights-probe-into-charlottesville-death/>

Trump Denounces KKK, Neo-Nazis As 'Repugnant' As He Seeks To Quell Criticism Of His Response To Charlottesville

By David Nakamura, 8/14/17

President Trump denounced the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis by name Monday, declaring racist hate groups “repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans,” as he sought to tamp down mounting criticism of his response to the killing of a counterprotester at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville over the weekend.

“Anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable,” Trump said in brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, where he returned after a week of vacation in Bedminster, N.J. “We condemn in the strongest possible terms the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence. It has no place in America.”

Trump added: “Racism is evil and those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups that are repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans.”

The statement came two days after the president failed to specifically condemn the white supremacist rally during which a woman was killed and as many as 19 wounded by a driver who reportedly espoused racist and pro-Nazi sentiments and had taken part in the “Unite the Right” march in Charlottesville. Trump, who met Monday with Attorney General Jeff Sessions and FBI Director Christopher Wray, reiterated that the Justice Department has launched a civil rights probe into the death of Heather Heyer, 32, who was killed when a car allegedly driven by James Alex Fields Jr., of Ohio slammed into a group of counterprotesters.

On Saturday, Trump condemned “the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides,” sparking sharp criticism from Democrats, civil rights proponents and some Republicans for failing to single out and condemn the white supremacists who sparked the violence.

On Monday, Kenneth C. Frazier, CEO of Merck, said in a tweet that he was resigning from Trump's American Manufacturing Council, saying he was doing so “as a matter of personal conscience” and that “America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy.”

Trump's remarks, which were not on his daily public schedule, appeared hastily arranged in a bid to move the White House past the backlash to his performance over the weekend. Yet before addressing the Charlottesville situation, Trump opened his remarks touting the economy, noting that stock markets are near record highs and the unemployment rate hovering at a 16-year low.

And though he condemned racism, Trump did not refer to the attack on the counterprotesters as “domestic terrorism,” even as Sessions said that it met the Justice Department's definition of such.

White House aides had defended Trump's initial response to the Charlottesville unrest by saying the president was focused on uniting the country against all violent clashes. The white supremacist groups — carrying Nazi and Confederate flags and, in some cases, armed with shields, batons and firearms permitted under Virginia's open carry laws — clashed with counterprotesters, some of whom fought back with pepper spray.

Yet Trump's critics, and even some of his Republican allies in Congress, expressed outrage that in failing to specifically condemn the racist groups, the president appeared to be emboldening them. Some criticized Trump's rhetoric during his campaign for inciting violence from his supporters, targeting immigrants and other minority groups.

“While today’s delayed words are welcome, they should have been spoken on Saturday,” Vanita Gupta, president of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, said in a statement. “This unconscionable delay has undermined his moral credibility as our nation’s leader.”

Trump attempted to counter such criticism Monday. “I've said many times that no matter the color of your skin, we all live under the same laws, we all salute the same great flag, and we are all made by the same almighty god,” he said. “We must love each other, show affection for each other and unite together in condemnation of this hatred, bigotry and violence.”

Trump called Heyer's death tragic and said it “fills us with grief, and we send her family our thoughts, our prayers and our love,” and he also praised the service of two Virginia state troopers, H. Jay Cullen and Berke Bates, who died Saturday during a helicopter crash while on

duty monitoring the march.

“These three fallen Americans embody the goodness and decency of our nation,” Trump said. “In times such as these, America has always shown its true character. Responding to hate with love, division with unity and violence with an unwavering resolve for justice.”

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-signs-order-increasing-trade-pressure-on-china-1502740357>

Trump Signs Order Increasing Trade Pressure On China

By Jacob Schlesinger, 8/14/17

President Donald Trump took a step Monday in his effort to ramp up trade pressure on China, directing aides to explore the prospect of sanctioning Beijing for the “unfair” acquisition of American high technology.

The directive, signed in a ceremony in the White House’s Diplomatic Reception Room, was the first formal China trade action taken by a president who has long blasted the country for improperly aggressive commercial practices.

“The theft of intellectual property by foreign countries costs our nation millions of jobs and billions and billions of dollars each and every year,” Mr. Trump said. “For too long this wealth has been drained from our country while Washington has done nothing.”

While Mr. Trump’s tone was tough, the process he launched was measured. He specifically ordered his trade representative to begin a study into whether to launch a formal investigation about widespread complaints that Beijing forces multinationals to license valuable technology to Chinese companies as the price of entry into China’s markets. Aides said if the investigation does proceed, it could take a year before any decisions are made on imposing trade sanctions.

The move is part of a broader, complex diplomatic strategy of juggling Washington's competing policy goals with China, balancing the desire for more cooperation in controlling North Korea against a desire to curb the \$347 billion bilateral trade deficit.

Mr. Trump took the action three days after he spoke by phone with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and a few hours after China announced it would ban imports of North Korean coal, iron, and seafood, enforcing United Nations sanctions aimed at curbing Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons program.

Mr. Trump said the trade order would safeguard "the intellectual property that is vital to our security and to our prosperity." He also indicated, without elaborating, more such action to come, saying, as he signed the directive "this is just the beginning."

The Trump administration's deliberative approach drew criticism from Democrats, still smarting from Mr. Trump's successful inroads into their base of labor-union voters in the Rust Belt with his campaign vows to take a tougher line on trade.

"President Trump's pattern continues: Tough talk on China, but weaker action than anyone could ever imagine," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.), said in a statement. "To make an announcement that they're going to decide whether to have an investigation on China's well-documented theft of our intellectual property is another signal to China that it is OK to keep stealing."

Asked to respond to U.S. criticism of Beijing's treatment of foreign intellectual property, Chinese foreign-ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said "China has formulated and improved relevant laws and regulations ... and we have raised awareness of society as a whole about intellectual property rights protection." She added that she hoped the U.S. would recognize "China's progress in this respect."

In targeting Chinese intellectual-property practices, the Trump administration is picking up an issue that has becoming increasingly alarming to U.S. companies in recent years. They are worried in particular about the combination of China's explicit industrial policy seeking self-

sufficiency in a range of tech sectors like robotics and semiconductors—articulated in its “Made in China 2025” initiative—along with a range of formal and informal requirements for foreign companies to share with Chinese partners proprietary material.

“This simply is not fair,” a senior administration official said in explaining the probe. U.S. firms “should not be forced or coerced to turn over the fruits of their labor,” the official added. “The current trajectory is unsustainable.”

The China investigation is one of several initiatives launched by the Trump administration aimed at reorienting U.S. trade policy. Mr. Trump has called for an overhaul of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which he has branded a “disaster” for U.S. workers. Talks with Mexico and Canada to rewrite that pact began Wednesday.

“The Obstructionist Democrats have given us (or not fixed) some of the worst trade deals in World History,” Mr. Trump said in a Monday morning tweet. “I am changing that fast!”

The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-leadership/wp/2017/08/14/trump-fires-back-after-the-ceo-of-merck-resigned-from-his-manufacturing-council/>

Trump Fires Back After The CEO Of Merck Resigned From His Manufacturing Council

By Jena McGregor, 8/14/17

The chief executive of Merck said Monday in a tweet that he was resigning from President Trump's manufacturing council, saying he was doing so “as CEO of Merck and as a matter of personal conscience” and that “America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy, which run counter to the American ideal that all people are created equal.”

In the statement, Kenneth C. Frazier, one of the few African American CEOs in the Fortune 500,

said, "I feel a responsibility to take a stand against intolerance and extremism" and touted the power of diversity. "Our country's strength stems from its diversity and the contributions made by men and women of different faiths, races, sexual orientations and political beliefs."

Within an hour after the statement was first issued, Trump tweeted his initial response. "Now that Ken Frazier of Merck Pharma has resigned from President's Manufacturing Council, he will have more time to LOWER RIPOFF DRUG PRICES!"

Frazier's resignation followed an outcry by critics about how President Trump had responded to protests over the weekend in Charlottesville that were led by white supremacist groups and turned violent. Many questioned why Trump had not explicitly named neo-Nazi, Ku Klux Klan or white nationalist groups when he said "we condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides," repeating "on many sides" for emphasis.

By midday Monday, after a weekend of mounting criticism, Trump made a statement in which he denounced the groups. In brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, he said that "racism is evil and those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups that are repugnant to everything we hold dear as Americans" and "we are equal under the law and we are equal under our Constitution." He said that "anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable."

A spokesman for Merck said the company had no further comment about Frazier's decision, his tweet or the president's response. The White House press office did not immediately respond earlier Monday to a request for comment.

On Saturday afternoon, following the eruption of violence in Charlottesville that morning, Trump first made a general statement about the violence, tweeting: "We ALL must be united & condemn all that hate stands for. There is no place for this kind of violence in America. Lets come together as one!" Later Saturday, he read a statement that included his condemnation of "hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides." Critics, including Republicans in his own party, said he should directly condemn the groups by name.

Trump's swift response — and his willingness to go after an American CEO but not initially name white supremacists in Charlottesville — was noted by a number of observers Monday on social media.

Frazier is not the first corporate chieftain to resign in protest from one of the president's advisory councils. In June, following the president's announcement that he planned to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement, both Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Disney CEO Robert Iger resigned from White House advisory councils.

Lowering drug prices was a major campaign promise for Trump, and throughout the early part of the year, the president made threatening and vague statements about the prices of drugs being too high. In the midst of one of the drug industry's biggest conferences in January, Trump accused the pharmaceutical industry of "getting away with murder," fueling speculation that he might take action on drug prices that the industry has long fought — such as allowing the government to bid on drugs in the Medicare program.

During a meeting of pharmaceutical company leaders at the White House, President Trump said that while there have been many successes in drug development, the pricing has been "astronomical" and must come down. (Reuters)

But in the intervening months, industry leaders have grown increasingly confident that any governmental actions won't harm their business models. Pharmaceutical chief executives, including Frazier, met with Trump in January and came away from the meeting with the impression that they would not face a serious effort from the White House to lower drug prices through government negotiation on Medicare drug prices.

Key leaders from across government have been meeting to discuss the issue of pricing, but based on leaked documents that have been circulating, including a potential draft executive order on drug pricing, Wall Street analysts have noted that some of the actions being proposed could actually help the pharmaceutical industry.

Politico

http://www.politico.com/story/2017/08/14/obama-russia-election-interference-241547?lo=ap_fl

Obama Team Was Warned In 2014 About Russian Interference

By Ali Watkins, 8/14/17

The Obama administration received multiple warnings from national security officials between 2014 and 2016 that the Kremlin was ramping up its intelligence operations and building disinformation networks it could use to disrupt the U.S. political system, according to more than half a dozen current and former officials.

As early as 2014, the administration received a report that quoted a well-connected Russian source as saying that the Kremlin was building a disinformation arm that could be used to interfere in Western democracies. The report, according to an official familiar with it, included a quote from the Russian source telling U.S. officials in Moscow, "You have no idea how extensive these networks are in Europe ... and in the U.S., Russia has penetrated media organizations, lobbying firms, political parties, governments and militaries in all of these places."

That report was circulated among the National Security Council, intelligence agencies and the State Department via secure email and cable in the spring of 2014 as part of a larger assessment of Russian intentions in Ukraine, the official said.

There was no explicit warning of a threat to U.S. elections, but the official said some diplomats and national security officials in Moscow felt the administration was too quick to dismiss the possibility that the Kremlin incursions could reach the United States.

"Even if the Russians and [Russian President Vladimir] Putin had these ambitions, they were doubtful of their capacity to execute them," the official said of the Obama administration.

Former White House officials, requesting anonymity to discuss intelligence reporting, confirmed that the administration began receiving increased traffic in 2014 about Russian disinformation and covert influence in campaigns, but said they did not recall receiving that specific warning about Russian inroads in the United States.

Ned Price, a former spokesperson for the National Security Council, rejected the idea that the

administration failed to heed warnings about Russian interference in the U.S. political system or Russian cyberespionage in general.

“The Obama administration was nothing but proactive in responding to Russian aggression in all of its forms, especially as Moscow became more brazen with and following its military moves against Ukraine beginning in 2014,” Price said, citing sanctions and increased American support to NATO as evidence of the former administration’s seriousness.

But subsequent events — including Russia’s interference in the American election through hacks of the emails of the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton campaign Chairman John Podesta, among other intrusions identified by U.S. intelligence — have left many in the former administration wondering whether they could have done more.

“People have criticized us ... for not coming out more forcefully and saying it,” former CIA Director John Brennan said at the Aspen National Forum in July. “There was no playbook for this.”

On Oct. 7, 2016, about a month before the election, the administration revealed, through a statement from the director of national intelligence and the Department of Homeland Security, that the U.S. government believed Russia was behind the hacks and was seeking to interfere with the election. The revelation, which many in the White House expected to be bombshell news, was largely overshadowed by the revelation that same day of an “Access Hollywood” tape in which Donald Trump made crude and sexist comments to anchor Billy Bush.

But others in the national security community say an overly cautious Obama White House could have done more both during the campaign and in the previous months and years to alert Russia that it was aware of its intentions to subvert the U.S. democracy — along with those of some other Western countries — and would retaliate forcefully at the first sign of Russian interference.

POLITICO spoke with more than a dozen current and former officials from across the national security spectrum, including intelligence agencies, the State Department and the Pentagon. Almost all said they were aware of Russia’s aggressive cyberespionage and disinformation campaigns — especially after the dramatic Russian attempt to hack Ukrainian elections in 2014 — but felt that either the White House or key agencies were unwilling to act forcefully to

counter the Russian actions.

Intelligence officials "had a list of things they could never get the signoffs on," one intelligence official said. "The truth is, nobody wanted to piss off the Russians."

Among the strategies put forward prior to the 2016 election were closing two Russian dachas in Maryland and New York, which were long suspected of being Russian intelligence sites, expelling diplomats and engaging in counterintelligence operations that would alert Putin to the United States' determination to strike back against any attempts at interference in the U.S. political system.

Officials outside the White House blamed micromanagement by the National Security Council for the lack of a more forceful response, while a former NSC official says any failure to act forcefully against Russia was because of concerns by the State Department and, less frequently, the Defense Department about potential retaliation by Moscow.

"The frustrations [about lack of forceful action] are justified and, frankly, were shared by the White House," said the former official, who requested anonymity due to this person's continuing work in Russia.

"The options were being discussed. They weren't being implemented," the former official added.

The State Department and Pentagon often objected to harsher measures endorsed by the intelligence community, one official said, a difference in perspective that some attributed to the fact that diplomatic staff and defense attaches were obvious targets of retaliation, rather than intelligence officers who usually work undercover.

Concerns about Russian cyberespionage and election meddling largely grew out of the events following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, followed by an aggressive Russian effort to influence the Ukrainian presidential election that May.

A Russia-backed cyberattack against Ukraine's voting infrastructure during the May election was thwarted at the 11th hour. The cyberintrusions — which in some cases could have changed voter tallies — were discovered just hours before what could have been catastrophic outcomes.

“The reports from sources deep inside the Russian government were alarming,” one current U.S. official who served under the Obama administration said. “We started getting stuff in April, May [of 2014] that was extraordinary about the extent of the threat and the capacities the Russians were building.”

“We were worried [Putin] would try to test us,” recalled a former Obama administration official.

The Ukraine crisis — coupled with the Kremlin's embrace of National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, who continues to be granted asylum by Moscow — was a sobering moment for the White House, one recently departed intelligence officer and the current administration official said.

Yet the administration still was reluctant to engage in more forceful counterintelligence strategies against the Kremlin, including more aggressively tracking and tailing Russian operatives within the United States, according to five of the officials who spoke to POLITICO.

Those outside the White House said they received frustrating mixed messages: The White House would subsequently dismiss Moscow's capabilities while also citing fear of an escalation with Putin.

Price, the former NSC spokesman, denied those claims.

“We responded with the same clarity of purpose following Moscow's aggression against U.S. officials in Russia and, of course, in the face of the Kremlin's attempt to undermine the integrity of our electoral process,” he said.

But several senior intelligence and administration officials recall it differently.

“It just seemed like it was difficult, especially after the Crimea and the Ukraine ... there still wasn’t a willingness to more heartily engage in the effort,” the former intelligence officer said.

In one particularly frustrating instance, officials said, they reiterated a longstanding desire to shut down the two Russian dachas in Maryland and New York. Amid escalating tensions, it was often presented as a way to send a message to Moscow.

“For quite some time, it was an active option. Secretary Kerry refused to consider it,” the former NSC official said. “We were getting pushback from the head of the agency being harassed. That was a constant frustration.”

Former Secretary of State John Kerry was overseas and unavailable for comment. But a former senior State Department official, speaking as a representative of Kerry, saw it differently. “Kerry agreed to shut down the dachas, but had not settled on the timing,” the official said.

Tensions finally reached a fever pitch in the summer of 2016. Just days before Russian operatives began releasing troves of stolen DNC emails, a CIA officer under official diplomatic cover was brutally beaten outside the U.S. embassy in Moscow. The officer managed to slip to safety inside the door of the U.S. compound but was immediately evacuated for medical care.

U.S. intelligence and law enforcement officials worked frantically to compile retaliatory options for the Obama White House. Despite being presented with several strategies — including more aggressively tailing Russian diplomats in the U.S. — it opted to do nothing immediately.

“There was some real anger,” the former intelligence officer said. “We weren’t going to mug anybody, but we could at least be more overt in our coverages. We could expel some people, we could do more overt surveillance on people.”

Another former intelligence official put it this way: “The longer we don’t push back, the harder they push.”

Even after the release of emails designed to damage Clinton’s campaign, the White House was reluctant to respond, something that several recently departed Obama-era officials have lamented.

After compiling a list of potential retaliatory options in the summer of 2016 — including kicking out more than 100 Russian diplomats, one official told POLITICO — the pushback from national security agencies was so great and varied, the NSC official said, that for months nothing was done.

“Any of these actions risked a Russian reciprocation,” the former NSC official said. “We were kind of caught in a catch-22.”

After the election, in December, the White House finally announced the expulsion of 35 diplomats and ordered the Kremlin officials out of the two Russian-owned dachas.

But in a further indication of the tensions within the Obama team, Kerry rejected suggestions that he personally break the news of the expulsions and closing of the dachas to Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, the former NSC official said. Instead, the job was left to Pat Kennedy, one of Kerry’s undersecretaries.

The former State Department official, speaking for Kerry, said the option of having Kerry communicate the expulsions and closing of the dachas to Lavrov was never discussed. But the former NSC official was unmoved.

“The idea of having Kerry doing it with Lavrov was raised several times and he didn’t want to do it,” the NSC official said.

The expulsions and closing of the dachas were symbolic moves that stung the Kremlin, but for many intelligence officers, it was too little, too late.

While some Obama White House officials privately concede that they, too, wish there had been a more forceful response, others stand by the decisions that were made.

“People at the working level don’t necessarily understand” the full scope of policy implications, one former White House official said.

Now, to the further frustration of some intelligence officers, there is little indication that, for all Trump’s bluster, he’ll be tougher on the Kremlin. In his first months in office, the president has signaled a willingness to work with Moscow on several fronts, and has pushed back hard against his own intelligence community’s assessment that Russia actively worked to elect him to the presidency.

It’s a bitter pill for many who see Trump’s election as the avoidable outcome of years’ worth of counterintelligence failings against Russia.

“They were warned. They underestimated it until it was too late,” the current administration official said of the Obama White House and Russia, with a tinge of bitterness. “They just didn’t know how to deal with the bad guys.”

Michael Abboud

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EPA Evening News Highlights 8.14.17

NTK Network: Report: Obama EPA Paid Unearned Overtime To Employees

A new report from the EPA Inspector General has shown that the Obama-era agency approved unearned overtime payments to its employees in at least one administrative region. According to the report, there were 79 instances of EPA employees receiving overtime pay that exceeded the agency's bi-weekly overtime cap in the Pacific Northwest: Most of the 79 exceedances lacked a supporting waiver request; Region 10 provided 15 waiver requests that covered only 21 of the 79 instances. The OIG's review of the 15 waiver requests showed that requests cited both emergencies and work that was critical to the mission of the agency as justification.

Politico: EPA To Revamp 2015 Power Plant Discharges Rule

EPA will conduct a new rulemaking to "potentially revise" portions of a 2015 regulation limiting toxic discharges from coal-fired power plants, according to a letter sent by Administrator Scott Pruitt to the U.S. Small Business Administration Friday and obtained by POLITICO today. The 2015 rule set new technology-based limits on heavy metals like mercury and arsenic that power plants discharge into waterways. The previous limits had not been updated in more than 30 years.

The Washington Examiner: EPA Chief, A Former Baseball Exec, Wants 'World, World Series'

President Trump's EPA chief has an idea that is sure to stir up a world debate. And it has nothing to do with the climate. Instead, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, former co-owner of Major League Baseball's AAA club in Oklahoma City, is calling for an international world series. In Iowa and appearing on WHO TV, Pruitt played along with a host's rapid-fire "Quick Six" questions, one of which was how baseball can be improved. Pruitt, who won a reputation as a marketing genius for his former Oklahoma City Redhawks, said: I think we need to do more to export the product internationally. There's such a hunger and desire in Asia particularly. We need to work on that.

E&E News: Greens launch legal war on EPA's TSCA rules

Several green groups launched a legal campaign last week against the Trump administration over a pair of rules issued by U.S. EPA under the nation's new chemicals law. Last year, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, a reform to the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act. It requires EPA to conduct risk assessments of chemicals without regard to cost and to protect vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women. At issue in the litigation are EPA's framework rules for the new law. One of them established the process and criteria for identifying high-priority chemicals for risk evaluations, while the other established the system for determining if the chemicals present an unreasonable risk to health or the environment. The administration issued final versions in June. "The activities we are announcing today demonstrate this administration's commitment to providing regulatory certainty to American businesses, while protecting human health and the environment," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said at the time.

E&E News: FERC's Chatterjee Vows To Support Coal, Nuclear

In his first substantive public remarks since being named chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission last week, Neil Chatterjee talked up the importance of coal and "baseload power." In the comments, part of an official FERC podcast called "Open Access," Chatterjee said his first priority will be to get started on an accumulated backlog of orders. "I heard about it all through the Senate confirmation process. There's a lot of consternation out there, and I'm committed to working with my colleagues to get after it right away," Chatterjee said.

National Evening News Highlights 8.14.17

The Washington Post: Trump Denounces KKK, Neo-Nazis As 'Repugnant' As He Seeks To Quell Criticism Of His Response To Charlottesville

President Trump denounced the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis by name Monday, declaring racist hate groups "repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans," as he sought to tamp down mounting criticism of his response to the killing of a

counterprotester at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville over the weekend. "Anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable," Trump said in brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, where he returned after a week of vacation in Bedminster, N.J. "We condemn in the strongest possible terms the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence. It has no place in America."

The Wall Street Journal: Trump Signs Order Increasing Trade Pressure On China

President Donald Trump took a step Monday in his effort to ramp up trade pressure on China, directing aides to explore the prospect of sanctioning Beijing for the "unfair" acquisition of American high technology. The directive, signed in a ceremony in the White House's Diplomatic Reception Room, was the first formal China trade action taken by a president who has long blasted the country for improperly aggressive commercial practices. "The theft of intellectual property by foreign countries costs our nation millions of jobs and billions and billions of dollars each and every year," Mr. Trump said. "For too long this wealth has been drained from our country while Washington has done nothing."

The Washington Post: Trump Fires Back After The CEO Of Merck Resigned From His Manufacturing Council

The chief executive of Merck said Monday in a tweet that he was resigning from President Trump's manufacturing council, saying he was doing so "as CEO of Merck and as a matter of personal conscience" and that "America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy, which run counter to the American ideal that all people are created equal."

Politico: Obama Team Was Warned In 2014 About Russian Interference

The Obama administration received multiple warnings from national security officials between 2014 and 2016 that the Kremlin was ramping up its intelligence operations and building disinformation networks it could use to disrupt the U.S. political system, according to more than half a dozen current and former officials. As early as 2014, the administration received a report that quoted a well-connected Russian source as saying that the Kremlin was building a disinformation arm that could be used to interfere in Western democracies. The report, according to an official familiar with it, included a quote from the Russian source telling U.S. officials in Moscow, "You have no idea how extensive these networks are in Europe ... and in the U.S., Russia has penetrated media organizations, lobbying firms, political parties, governments and militaries in all of these places."

NO TRUMP TWEETS

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/report-obama-epa-paid-unearned-overtime-to-employees/>

Report: Obama EPA Paid Unearned Overtime To Employees

By NTK Staff, 8/14/17

A new report from the EPA Inspector General has shown that the Obama-era agency approved unearned overtime payments to its employees in at least one administrative region.

According to the report, there were 79 instances of EPA employees receiving overtime pay that exceeded the agency's bi-weekly overtime cap in the Pacific Northwest:

Most of the 79 exceedances lacked a supporting waiver request; Region 10 provided 15 waiver requests that covered only 21 of the 79 instances. The OIG's review of the 15 waiver requests showed that requests cited both emergencies and work that was critical to the mission of the agency as justification.

These 15 approvals also lacked the proper justification, the Inspector General wrote.

Furthermore, there appeared to be no mechanisms to prevent such abuses of overtime payroll:

Based on interviews with officials and personnel, we learned that there is no clear line of responsibility to maintain

documentation for waiver requests or to track requests and approvals between the region, OARM and OCFO. Neither OARM nor OCFO could provide a list of waivers for the period requested or supporting documentation.

This isn't the first time that the EPA under Scott Pruitt's leadership has moved to end the luxurious waste of taxpayer dollars at the agency. In June, Pruitt ended a \$1 million employee fitness center program, after reports of waste came in from national offices.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/08/epa-to-revamp-2015-power-plant-discharges-rule-091780>

EPA To Revamp 2015 Power Plant Discharges Rule

By Annie Snider, 8/14/17

EPA will conduct a new rulemaking to "potentially revise" portions of a 2015 regulation limiting toxic discharges from coal-fired power plants, according to a letter sent by Administrator Scott Pruitt to the U.S. Small Business Administration Friday and obtained by POLITICO today. The 2015 rule set new technology-based limits on heavy metals like mercury and arsenic that power plants discharge into waterways. The previous limits had not been updated in more than 30 years.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-chief-a-former-baseball-exec-wants-world-world-series/article/2631464>

EPA chief, a former baseball exec, wants 'world, world series'

By: Paul Bedard, 8/14/17, 1:37 p.m.

President Trump's EPA chief has an idea that is sure to stir up a world debate.

And it has nothing to do with the climate.

Instead, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, former co-owner of Major League Baseball's AAA club in Oklahoma City, is calling for an international world series.

In Iowa and appearing on WHO TV, Pruitt played along with a host's rapid-fire "Quick Six" questions, one of which was how baseball can be improved.

Pruitt, who won a reputation as a marketing genius for his former Oklahoma City Redhawks, said:

I think we need to do more to export the product internationally. There's such a hunger and desire in Asia particularly. We need to work on that.

I think baseball is one of those sports we can actually truly have a world series, we can have a world competition. We've seen it in other instances and I think that's an opportunity that we need to be pursuing.

Pruitt, who sold his stake in the team after being elected Oklahoma attorney general in 2010, ended the interview with a prediction: The Chicago Cubs will win the World Series "again in the next five years."

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/08/14/stories/1060058755>

Greens launch legal war on EPA's TSCA rules

Amanda Reilly, 8/14/17

Several green groups launched a legal campaign last week against the Trump administration over a pair of rules issued by U.S. EPA under the nation's new chemicals law.

Environmentalists filed lawsuits Thursday and Friday in at least three federal appellate courts around the country seeking review of the rules, which EPA issued in June to guide risk evaluations and prioritization of chemical substances.

The new standards "leave the public at risk from chemicals commonly found in our homes, schools and workplaces," said Richard Denison, lead scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund, one of the plaintiffs.

"Our legal challenges seek to hold EPA to the law and ensure that the public is protected as Congress intended," Denison said.

Last year, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, a reform to the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act.

It requires EPA to conduct risk assessments of chemicals without regard to cost and to protect vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women.

At issue in the litigation are EPA's framework rules for the new law. One of them established the process and criteria for identifying high-priority chemicals for risk evaluations, while the other established the system for determining if the chemicals present an unreasonable risk to health or the environment. The administration issued final versions in June.

"The activities we are announcing today demonstrate this administration's commitment to providing regulatory certainty to American businesses, while protecting human health and the environment," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said at the time (E&E News PM, June 22).

"The new process for evaluating existing chemicals outlined in these rules will increase public confidence in chemical safety without stifling innovation," he said.

2nd and 4th circuits

In their lawsuits, the environmental groups accuse EPA under the new Trump administration of unlawfully weakening the rules.

EDF, which filed its lawsuit in the New York-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, said EPA reversed the position taken during the Obama administration that it must consider all of the conditions for use of a given chemical substance.

The final rule stated that the agency may "exclude certain activities that EPA has determined to be conditions of use" from its risk analysis.

In a blog post, the Natural Resources Defense Council said it opposes the new rules because they give EPA "nearly unlimited discretion" to determine which uses of a chemical it considers to determine whether a substance is unsafe.

The resulting "incomplete analysis is likely to be wrong and could lead EPA to conclude that a chemical does not pose an unreasonable risk when it actually does," NRDC senior attorney Daniel Rosenberg and senior scientist Jennifer Sass wrote in the post.

NRDC, together with the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments and Cape Fear River Watch, sued EPA over the

rules in the Virginia-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

9th Circuit

Separately, Earthjustice filed a complaint Thursday in the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of the Environmental Working Group, WE ACT for Environmental Justice, the Learning Disabilities Association of America, the United Steelworkers, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Environmental Health Strategy Center and the Sierra Club.

Labor unions joined the groups, as did Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families; the Vermont Public Interest Research Group; and the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization.

The latter trio of groups is represented by Robert Sussman, a top EPA official in the Obama and Clinton administrations who has warned that the Trump administration may back down from last year's compromise reform law (Greenwire, July 20).

In statements announcing the lawsuits, groups blamed the president's choice of Nancy Beck to serve as the top political official in EPA's chemical safety office for the changes.

Prior to joining the administration, Beck was the senior director of regulatory science policy at the American Chemistry Council, a chemical industry trade group that generally opposes stricter regulations.

"The EPA's newly adopted rules — overseen by a former high-level chemical industry official with head-spinning conflicts of interest — will leave children, communities and workers vulnerable to dangerous chemicals," Earthjustice attorney Eve Gartner said in a statement.

"This lawsuit is about one thing: holding the Trump EPA to the letter of the law and ensuring it fulfills its mandate to protect the public," she said.

Beck has pushed back against greens' concerns about her appointment (Greenwire, July 17).

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/08/14/stories/1060058757>

FERC's Chatterjee Vows To Support Coal, Nuclear

Sam Mintz, 8/14/17

In his first substantive public remarks since being named chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission last week, Neil Chatterjee talked up the importance of coal and "baseload power."

In the comments, part of an official FERC podcast called "Open Access," Chatterjee said his first priority will be to get started on an accumulated backlog of orders.

"I heard about it all through the Senate confirmation process. There's a lot of consternation out there, and I'm committed to working with my colleagues to get after it right away," Chatterjee said.

Millions of dollars of infrastructure, including major natural gas pipelines, has been in limbo since FERC Chairman Norman Bay resigned in February, leaving the body without a quorum and unable to give final approvals.

Chatterjee also said he wanted to focus on ensuring the reliability and resilience of the electric system — specifically by supporting "baseload" coal and power plants.

"I believe that generation, including our existing coal and nuclear fleet, need to be properly compensated to recognize the value they provide to the system," he said.

The former aide to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) was particularly vocal about coal. "I'm a Kentucky native. I've seen firsthand throughout my life how important a contribution coal makes to an affordable and reliable electric system," he said.

"Last year, coal provided over 80 percent of the electricity in Kentucky," he said. "As a nation, we need to ensure that coal, along with gas and renewables, continue to be part of our diverse fuel mix."

The comments align with the premise that Energy Secretary Rick Perry gave when ordering a controversial study of the electric grid: that coal and nuclear plants are essential for the grid's reliability.

Progressive and environmental groups — and many independent experts — have challenged that concept, arguing it is possible to maintain stability even while continuing to use more renewables like wind and solar, and less coal (Greenwire, July 11).

Chatterjee, who was sworn in to the commission last week along with former Pennsylvania regulator Robert Powelson, is holding the gavel only on an interim basis. Jones Day energy lawyer Kevin McIntyre will take over if and when confirmed.

McIntyre and another nominee, Democratic Senate aide Richard Glick, are scheduled to face the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee for a confirmation hearing Sept. 7.

The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/08/14/trump-denounces-kkk-neo-nazis-as-justice-department-launches-civil-rights-probe-into-charlottesville-death/>

Trump Denounces KKK, Neo-Nazis As 'Repugnant' As He Seeks To Quell Criticism Of His Response To Charlottesville
By David Nakamura, 8/14/17

President Trump denounced the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis by name Monday, declaring racist hate groups "repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans," as he sought to tamp down mounting criticism of his response to the killing of a counterprotester at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville over the weekend.

"Anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable," Trump said in brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, where he returned after a week of vacation in Bedminster, N.J. "We condemn in the strongest possible terms the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence. It has no place in America."

Trump added: "Racism is evil and those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups that are repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans."

The statement came two days after the president failed to specifically condemn the white supremacist rally during which a woman was killed and as many as 19 wounded by a driver who reportedly espoused racist and pro-Nazi sentiments and had taken part in the "Unite the Right" march in Charlottesville. Trump, who met Monday with Attorney General Jeff Sessions and FBI Director Christopher Wray, reiterated that the Justice Department has launched a civil rights probe into the death of Heather Heyer, 32, who was killed when a car allegedly driven by James Alex Fields Jr., of Ohio slammed into a group of counterprotesters.

On Saturday, Trump condemned “the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides,” sparking sharp criticism from Democrats, civil rights proponents and some Republicans for failing to single out and condemn the white supremacists who sparked the violence.

On Monday, Kenneth C. Frazier, CEO of Merck, said in a tweet that he was resigning from Trump's American Manufacturing Council, saying he was doing so “as a matter of personal conscience” and that “America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy.”

Trump's remarks, which were not on his daily public schedule, appeared hastily arranged in a bid to move the White House past the backlash to his performance over the weekend. Yet before addressing the Charlottesville situation, Trump opened his remarks touting the economy, noting that stock markets are near record highs and the unemployment rate hovering at a 16-year low.

And though he condemned racism, Trump did not refer to the attack on the counterprotesters as “domestic terrorism,” even as Sessions said that it met the Justice Department's definition of such.

White House aides had defended Trump's initial response to the Charlottesville unrest by saying the president was focused on uniting the country against all violent clashes. The white supremacist groups — carrying Nazi and Confederate flags and, in some cases, armed with shields, batons and firearms permitted under Virginia's open carry laws — clashed with counterprotesters, some of whom fought back with pepper spray.

Yet Trump's critics, and even some of his Republican allies in Congress, expressed outrage that in failing to specifically condemn the racist groups, the president appeared to be emboldening them. Some criticized Trump's rhetoric during his campaign for inciting violence from his supporters, targeting immigrants and other minority groups.

“While today's delayed words are welcome, they should have been spoken on Saturday,” Vanita Gupta, president of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, said in a statement. “This unconscionable delay has undermined his moral credibility as our nation's leader.”

Trump attempted to counter such criticism Monday. “I've said many times that no matter the color of your skin, we all live under the same laws, we all salute the same great flag, and we are all made by the same almighty god,” he said. “We must love each other, show affection for each other and unite together in condemnation of this hatred, bigotry and violence.”

Trump called Heyer's death tragic and said it “fills us with grief, and we send her family our thoughts, our prayers and our love,” and he also praised the service of two Virginia state troopers, H. Jay Cullen and Berke Bates, who died Saturday during a helicopter crash while on duty monitoring the march.

“These three fallen Americans embody the goodness and decency of our nation,” Trump said. “In times such as these, America has always shown its true character. Responding to hate with love, division with unity and violence with an unwavering resolve for justice.”

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-signs-order-increasing-trade-pressure-on-china-1502740357>

Trump Signs Order Increasing Trade Pressure On China

By Jacob Schlesinger, 8/14/17

President Donald Trump took a step Monday in his effort to ramp up trade pressure on China, directing aides to explore the prospect of sanctioning Beijing for the “unfair” acquisition of American high technology.

The directive, signed in a ceremony in the White House's Diplomatic Reception Room, was the first formal China trade action taken by a president who has long blasted the country for improperly aggressive commercial practices.

"The theft of intellectual property by foreign countries costs our nation millions of jobs and billions and billions of dollars each and every year," Mr. Trump said. "For too long this wealth has been drained from our country while Washington has done nothing."

While Mr. Trump's tone was tough, the process he launched was measured. He specifically ordered his trade representative to begin a study into whether to launch a formal investigation about widespread complaints that Beijing forces multinationals to license valuable technology to Chinese companies as the price of entry into China's markets. Aides said if the investigation does proceed, it could take a year before any decisions are made on imposing trade sanctions.

The move is part of a broader, complex diplomatic strategy of juggling Washington's competing policy goals with China, balancing the desire for more cooperation in controlling North Korea against a desire to curb the \$347 billion bilateral trade deficit.

Mr. Trump took the action three days after he spoke by phone with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and a few hours after China announced it would ban imports of North Korean coal, iron, and seafood, enforcing United Nations sanctions aimed at curbing Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons program.

Mr. Trump said the trade order would safeguard "the intellectual property that is vital to our security and to our prosperity." He also indicated, without elaborating, more such action to come, saying, as he signed the directive "this is just the beginning."

The Trump administration's deliberative approach drew criticism from Democrats, still smarting from Mr. Trump's successful inroads into their base of labor-union voters in the Rust Belt with his campaign vows to take a tougher line on trade.

"President Trump's pattern continues: Tough talk on China, but weaker action than anyone could ever imagine," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.), said in a statement. "To make an announcement that they're going to decide whether to have an investigation on China's well-documented theft of our intellectual property is another signal to China that it is OK to keep stealing."

Asked to respond to U.S. criticism of Beijing's treatment of foreign intellectual property, Chinese foreign-ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said "China has formulated and improved relevant laws and regulations ... and we have raised awareness of society as a whole about intellectual property rights protection." She added that she hoped the U.S. would recognize "China's progress in this respect."

In targeting Chinese intellectual-property practices, the Trump administration is picking up an issue that has becoming increasingly alarming to U.S. companies in recent years. They are worried in particular about the combination of China's explicit industrial policy seeking self-sufficiency in a range of tech sectors like robotics and semiconductors—articulated in its "Made in China 2025" initiative—along with a range of formal and informal requirements for foreign companies to share with Chinese partners proprietary material.

"This simply is not fair," a senior administration official said in explaining the probe. U.S. firms "should not be forced or coerced to turn over the fruits of their labor," the official added. "The current trajectory is unsustainable."

The China investigation is one of several initiatives launched by the Trump administration aimed at reorienting U.S. trade policy. Mr. Trump has called for an overhaul of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which he has branded a "disaster" for U.S. workers. Talks with Mexico and Canada to rewrite that pact begin Wednesday.

"The Obstructionist Democrats have given us (or not fixed) some of the worst trade deals in World History," Mr. Trump said in a Monday morning tweet. "I am changing that fast!"

The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-leadership/wp/2017/08/14/trump-fires-back-after-the-ceo-of-merck-resigned-from-his-manufacturing-council/>

Trump Fires Back After The CEO Of Merck Resigned From His Manufacturing Council

By Jena McGregor, 8/14/17

The chief executive of Merck said Monday in a tweet that he was resigning from President Trump's manufacturing council, saying he was doing so "as CEO of Merck and as a matter of personal conscience" and that "America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy, which run counter to the American ideal that all people are created equal."

In the statement, Kenneth C. Frazier, one of the few African American CEOs in the Fortune 500, said, "I feel a responsibility to take a stand against intolerance and extremism" and touted the power of diversity. "Our country's strength stems from its diversity and the contributions made by men and women of different faiths, races, sexual orientations and political beliefs."

Within an hour after the statement was first issued, Trump tweeted his initial response. "Now that Ken Frazier of Merck Pharma has resigned from President's Manufacturing Council, he will have more time to LOWER RIPOFF DRUG PRICES!"

Frazier's resignation followed an outcry by critics about how President Trump had responded to protests over the weekend in Charlottesville that were led by white supremacist groups and turned violent. Many questioned why Trump had not explicitly named neo-Nazi, Ku Klux Klan or white nationalist groups when he said "we condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides," repeating "on many sides" for emphasis.

By midday Monday, after a weekend of mounting criticism, Trump made a statement in which he denounced the groups. In brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, he said that "racism is evil and those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups that are repugnant to everything we hold dear as Americans" and "we are equal under the law and we are equal under our Constitution." He said that "anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable."

A spokesman for Merck said the company had no further comment about Frazier's decision, his tweet or the president's response. The White House press office did not immediately respond earlier Monday to a request for comment.

On Saturday afternoon, following the eruption of violence in Charlottesville that morning, Trump first made a general statement about the violence, tweeting: "We ALL must be united & condemn all that hate stands for. There is no place for this kind of violence in America. Lets come together as one!" Later Saturday, he read a statement that included his condemnation of "hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides." Critics, including Republicans in his own party, said he should directly condemn the groups by name.

Trump's swift response — and his willingness to go after an American CEO but not initially name white supremacists in Charlottesville — was noted by a number of observers Monday on social media.

Frazier is not the first corporate chieftain to resign in protest from one of the president's advisory councils. In June, following the president's announcement that he planned to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement, both Tesla CEO

Elon Musk and Disney CEO Robert Iger resigned from White House advisory councils.

Lowering drug prices was a major campaign promise for Trump, and throughout the early part of the year, the president made threatening and vague statements about the prices of drugs being too high. In the midst of one of the drug industry's biggest conferences in January, Trump accused the pharmaceutical industry of "getting away with murder," fueling speculation that he might take action on drug prices that the industry has long fought — such as allowing the government to bid on drugs in the Medicare program.

During a meeting of pharmaceutical company leaders at the White House, President Trump said that while there have been many successes in drug development, the pricing has been "astronomical" and must come down. (Reuters) But in the intervening months, industry leaders have grown increasingly confident that any governmental actions won't harm their business models. Pharmaceutical chief executives, including Frazier, met with Trump in January and came away from the meeting with the impression that they would not face a serious effort from the White House to lower drug prices through government negotiation on Medicare drug prices.

Key leaders from across government have been meeting to discuss the issue of pricing, but based on leaked documents that have been circulating, including a potential draft executive order on drug pricing, Wall Street analysts have noted that some of the actions being proposed could actually help the pharmaceutical industry.

Politico

http://www.politico.com/story/2017/08/14/obama-russia-election-interference-241547?lo=ap_f1

Obama Team Was Warned In 2014 About Russian Interference

By Ali Watkins, 8/14/17

The Obama administration received multiple warnings from national security officials between 2014 and 2016 that the Kremlin was ramping up its intelligence operations and building disinformation networks it could use to disrupt the U.S. political system, according to more than half a dozen current and former officials.

As early as 2014, the administration received a report that quoted a well-connected Russian source as saying that the Kremlin was building a disinformation arm that could be used to interfere in Western democracies. The report, according to an official familiar with it, included a quote from the Russian source telling U.S. officials in Moscow, "You have no idea how extensive these networks are in Europe ... and in the U.S., Russia has penetrated media organizations, lobbying firms, political parties, governments and militaries in all of these places."

That report was circulated among the National Security Council, intelligence agencies and the State Department via secure email and cable in the spring of 2014 as part of a larger assessment of Russian intentions in Ukraine, the official said.

There was no explicit warning of a threat to U.S. elections, but the official said some diplomats and national security officials in Moscow felt the administration was too quick to dismiss the possibility that the Kremlin incursions could reach the United States.

"Even if the Russians and [Russian President Vladimir] Putin had these ambitions, they were doubtful of their capacity to execute them," the official said of the Obama administration.

Former White House officials, requesting anonymity to discuss intelligence reporting, confirmed that the administration began receiving increased traffic in 2014 about Russian disinformation and covert influence in campaigns, but said they did not recall receiving that specific warning about Russian inroads in the United States.

Ned Price, a former spokesperson for the National Security Council, rejected the idea that the administration failed to heed warnings about Russian interference in the U.S. political system or Russian cyberespionage in general.

“The Obama administration was nothing but proactive in responding to Russian aggression in all of its forms, especially as Moscow became more brazen with and following its military moves against Ukraine beginning in 2014,” Price said, citing sanctions and increased American support to NATO as evidence of the former administration’s seriousness.

But subsequent events — including Russia’s interference in the American election through hacks of the emails of the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton campaign Chairman John Podesta, among other intrusions identified by U.S. intelligence — have left many in the former administration wondering whether they could have done more.

“People have criticized us ... for not coming out more forcefully and saying it,” former CIA Director John Brennan said at the Aspen National Forum in July. “There was no playbook for this.”

On Oct. 7, 2016, about a month before the election, the administration revealed, through a statement from the director of national intelligence and the Department of Homeland Security, that the U.S. government believed Russia was behind the hacks and was seeking to interfere with the election. The revelation, which many in the White House expected to be bombshell news, was largely overshadowed by the revelation that same day of an “Access Hollywood” tape in which Donald Trump made crude and sexist comments to anchor Billy Bush.

But others in the national security community say an overly cautious Obama White House could have done more both during the campaign and in the previous months and years to alert Russia that it was aware of its intentions to subvert the U.S. democracy — along with those of some other Western countries — and would retaliate forcefully at the first sign of Russian interference.

POLITICO spoke with more than a dozen current and former officials from across the national security spectrum, including intelligence agencies, the State Department and the Pentagon. Almost all said they were aware of Russia’s aggressive cyberespionage and disinformation campaigns — especially after the dramatic Russian attempt to hack Ukrainian elections in 2014 — but felt that either the White House or key agencies were unwilling to act forcefully to counter the Russian actions.

Intelligence officials “had a list of things they could never get the signoffs on,” one intelligence official said. “The truth is, nobody wanted to piss off the Russians.”

Among the strategies put forward prior to the 2016 election were closing two Russian dachas in Maryland and New York, which were long suspected of being Russian intelligence sites, expelling diplomats and engaging in counterintelligence operations that would alert Putin to the United States’ determination to strike back against any attempts at interference in the U.S. political system.

Officials outside the White House blamed micromanagement by the National Security Council for the lack of a more forceful response, while a former NSC official says any failure to act forcefully against Russia was because of concerns by the State Department and, less frequently, the Defense Department about potential retaliation by Moscow.

“The frustrations [about lack of forceful action] are justified and, frankly, were shared by the White House,” said the former official, who requested anonymity due to this person’s continuing work in Russia.

“The options were being discussed. They weren’t being implemented,” the former official added.

The State Department and Pentagon often objected to harsher measures endorsed by the intelligence community, one official said, a difference in perspective that some attributed to the fact that diplomatic staff and defense attaches were obvious targets of retaliation, rather than intelligence officers who usually work undercover.

Concerns about Russian cyberespionage and election meddling largely grew out of the events following Russia’s

annexation of Crimea in March 2014, followed by an aggressive Russian effort to influence the Ukrainian presidential election that May.

A Russia-backed cyberattack against Ukraine's voting infrastructure during the May election was thwarted at the 11th hour. The cyberintrusions — which in some cases could have changed voter tallies — were discovered just hours before what could have been catastrophic outcomes.

"The reports from sources deep inside the Russian government were alarming," one current U.S. official who served under the Obama administration said. "We started getting stuff in April, May [of 2014] that was extraordinary about the extent of the threat and the capacities the Russians were building."

"We were worried [Putin] would try to test us," recalled a former Obama administration official.

The Ukraine crisis — coupled with the Kremlin's embrace of National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, who continues to be granted asylum by Moscow — was a sobering moment for the White House, one recently departed intelligence officer and the current administration official said.

Yet the administration still was reluctant to engage in more forceful counterintelligence strategies against the Kremlin, including more aggressively tracking and tailing Russian operatives within the United States, according to five of the officials who spoke to POLITICO.

Those outside the White House said they received frustrating mixed messages: The White House would subsequently dismiss Moscow's capabilities while also citing fear of an escalation with Putin.

Price, the former NSC spokesman, denied those claims.

"We responded with the same clarity of purpose following Moscow's aggression against U.S. officials in Russia and, of course, in the face of the Kremlin's attempt to undermine the integrity of our electoral process," he said.

But several senior intelligence and administration officials recall it differently.

"It just seemed like it was difficult, especially after the Crimea and the Ukraine ... there still wasn't a willingness to more heartily engage in the effort," the former intelligence officer said.

In one particularly frustrating instance, officials said, they reiterated a longstanding desire to shut down the two Russian dachas in Maryland and New York. Amid escalating tensions, it was often presented as a way to send a message to Moscow.

"For quite some time, it was an active option. Secretary Kerry refused to consider it," the former NSC official said. "We were getting pushback from the head of the agency being harassed. That was a constant frustration."

Former Secretary of State John Kerry was overseas and unavailable for comment. But a former senior State Department official, speaking as a representative of Kerry, saw it differently. "Kerry agreed to shut down the dachas, but had not settled on the timing," the official said.

Tensions finally reached a fever pitch in the summer of 2016. Just days before Russian operatives began releasing troves of stolen DNC emails, a CIA officer under official diplomatic cover was brutally beaten outside the U.S. embassy in Moscow. The officer managed to slip to safety inside the door of the U.S. compound but was immediately evacuated for medical care.

U.S. intelligence and law enforcement officials worked frantically to compile retaliatory options for the Obama White House. Despite being presented with several strategies — including more aggressively tailing Russian diplomats in the U.S. — it opted to do nothing immediately.

“There was some real anger,” the former intelligence officer said. “We weren’t going to mug anybody, but we could at least be more overt in our coverages. We could expel some people, we could do more overt surveillance on people.”

Another former intelligence official put it this way: “The longer we don’t push back, the harder they push.”

Even after the release of emails designed to damage Clinton’s campaign, the White House was reluctant to respond, something that several recently departed Obama-era officials have lamented.

After compiling a list of potential retaliatory options in the summer of 2016 — including kicking out more than 100 Russian diplomats, one official told POLITICO — the pushback from national security agencies was so great and varied, the NSC official said, that for months nothing was done.

“Any of these actions risked a Russian reciprocation,” the former NSC official said. “We were kind of caught in a catch-22.”

After the election, in December, the White House finally announced the expulsion of 35 diplomats and ordered the Kremlin officials out of the two Russian-owned dachas.

But in a further indication of the tensions within the Obama team, Kerry rejected suggestions that he personally break the news of the expulsions and closing of the dachas to Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, the former NSC official said. Instead, the job was left to Pat Kennedy, one of Kerry’s undersecretaries.

The former State Department official, speaking for Kerry, said the option of having Kerry communicate the expulsions and closing of the dachas to Lavrov was never discussed. But the former NSC official was unmoved.

“The idea of having Kerry doing it with Lavrov was raised several times and he didn’t want to do it,” the NSC official said.

The expulsions and closing of the dachas were symbolic moves that stung the Kremlin, but for many intelligence officers, it was too little, too late.

While some Obama White House officials privately concede that they, too, wish there had been a more forceful response, others stand by the decisions that were made.

“People at the working level don’t necessarily understand” the full scope of policy implications, one former White House official said.

Now, to the further frustration of some intelligence officers, there is little indication that, for all Trump’s bluster, he’ll be tougher on the Kremlin. In his first months in office, the president has signaled a willingness to work with Moscow on several fronts, and has pushed back hard against his own intelligence community’s assessment that Russia actively worked to elect him to the presidency.

It’s a bitter pill for many who see Trump’s election as the avoidable outcome of years’ worth of counterintelligence failings against Russia.

“They were warned. They underestimated it until it was too late,” the current administration official said of the Obama White House and Russia, with a tinge of bitterness. “They just didn’t know how to deal with the bad guys.”

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 6/19/2017 3:10:52 PM
Subject: RE: Updated Proposal...

There are a bunch of offices it has to go through, no idea to be honest but George does.

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 11:10 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Updated Proposal...

So who needs to sign it?

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 10:59 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...

George has been dragging his feet on this for 7 weeks. Attached is the contract.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 9:38 AM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>; 'jpounder@definerscorp.com' <jpounder@definerscorp.com>
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...

George –

I am adding you to this email. Can you please contact Joe Pounder and circle back with me. I believe Definers is able to do morning summaries or morning media matrixs that

we can circulate within the agency to interested people and they are also capable of doing live-time alerts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Thank you,

Jahan

From: Joe Pounder [<mailto:jpounder@definerscorp.com>]
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2017 5:26 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Updated Proposal...

Mr. Wilcox,

Please find attached an updated proposal with examples of actual alerts and daily matrix. Please let us know if you have any other questions. Our plan is when it is rolled out to clients, these alerts will be compiled into our Definers Console where they will be also stored and searchable in addition to emailed directly to inboxes. Thanks again.

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definerscorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Kelsey Tamborrino
Sent: Mon 2/5/2018 4:46:50 PM
Subject: Re: Hey Kelsey ...

Hi Jahan — thanks for reaching out. It was included in the Afternoon Energy newsletter on Friday: <https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/afternoon-energy/2018/02/zinkes-gone-to-carolina-092603>

From: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 5, 2018 11:33 AM
Subject: Hey Kelsey ...
To: Kelsey Tamborrino <ktamborrino@politico.com>

I thought it was odd you didn't include our interview with the New York Times.

**Listen to 'The Daily': A Conversation with Scott
Pruitt:**<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/02/podcasts/the-daily/scott-pruitt-epa.html>

From: POLITICO Pro Energy [mailto:politicoemail@politicopro.com]
Sent: Monday, February 5, 2018 5:45 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Morning Energy: Not just Democrats blocking Trump nominees — CEQ nominee withdrawn — More trouble in the nuclear family

By Kelsey Tamborrino | 02/05/2018 05:43 AM EDT

With help from Darius Dixon, Eric Wolff and Alex Guillén

YOU'VE REALLY GOT A HOLD ON ME: It's not just Democrats who are obstructing President Donald Trump's nominees across key positions in federal agencies — GOP lawmakers are standing in the way, too. At least 11 Republican senators have disclosed holds on nominees for agencies including the departments of Energy, Agriculture and State, Pro's Anthony Adragna reports.

Republicans have been quick to blame Democrats for keeping the Trump administration from

filling key federal positions, but the GOP holds have become common as senators turn to them for leverage to extract policy concessions from federal agencies. And it's notables since senior Republicans have raised [the possibility of changing](#) Senate rules due to the nomination backlog, and the hold-ups are causing intraparty frustration for making an already arduous confirmation process even more difficult.

Most recently, Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman [John Barrasso](#) announced he put a hold on an Energy nominee over the agency's practice of selling excess government-controlled uranium onto the market. And he's not the only one: Sen. [Ted Cruz](#) is objecting to an Agriculture Department nominee as he pushes for changes to the biofuel program, while Sen. [Dean Heller](#), an opponent of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, is blocking a nominee to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Senate Energy Chairman [Lisa Murkowski](#) called the holds "silly" and said her fellow Republicans should "knock it off." Read the [story here](#).

WELCOME TO MONDAY! Congrats to the Philadelphia Eagles! I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino, and RFA's Rachel Gantz was first to know New Orleans and Miami are tied for hosting the most Super Bowls, with 10 each. Miami, however, will hold the record once it hosts again in 2020. For today: Who was the first House member to represent two states? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to toktamborrino@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@kelseytam](#), [@Morning_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

HARTNETT WHITE OUT: Kathleen Hartnett White is out as nominee to lead the White House's Council on Environmental Quality, ME has confirmed. A controversial nominee, Hartnett White had faced considerable backlash for her previous comments on carbon dioxide, climate science and anti-pollution regulations, not to mention her crediting fossil fuels for helping to end slavery. Her nomination had been stalled for months, even as other energy picks moved forward.

"I respectfully withdraw my name from further consideration to be confirmed as Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality effective immediately. I want to thank President Trump for his confidence in me and I will continue to champion his policies and leadership on environmental and energy issues of critical importance to making our nation great, prosperous and secure again," Hartnett White said in a statement. "... In the best interest of facilitating confirmation of the President's nominees throughout his administration, as well the needs of my family and work, I feel it is best, at this point in time, to withdraw my name from further consideration."

The White House still had faith in Hartnett White last month, when it renominated her after her nomination had stagnated the previous year. Hartnett White had been a target of greens since her name was first brought up in late 2016. During an appearance before the Senate EPW Committee after being nominated, Hartnett White touted carbon dioxide as "necessary for life on Earth" and drew initial concern from several corn-state Republicans about calls to repeal the Renewable Fuel Standard, but then walked that back to align herself with the White House's stance.

IN THE CLEAR: The news also helps clear the way for two EPA nominations to move forward: Andrew Wheeler — whose past lobbying clients include coal producer Murray Energy — to be deputy administrator and Holly Greaves to be chief financial officer. Last week, Tom Carper, the ranking Democrat on EPW and fierce critic of Hartnett White, told EPA's Scott Pruitt he'd work to block the EPA nominees until Trump withdrew the Hartnett White nomination. "I made it clear that those nominations were going to find it difficult to move forward expeditiously as long as the nomination of Kathleen Hartnett White was still out there," Carper told reporters. On Saturday, Carper touted the news. "It was abundantly clear that leading the White House Council on Environmental Quality wasn't the right job for Kathleen Hartnett White," hetweeted. "I often say when you think you're right, when you know you're right, you must never give up. That's what we did here." The EPW Committee announced it will hold a business meeting on Wheeler's nomination on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.

NEI'S MESSY DIVORCE GOES TO COURT: NextEra Energy made a splash last month when it dropped its membership with the Nuclear Energy Institute. But now the company is suing the D.C. trade group over alleged economic retaliation. In a lawsuit filed Friday, NextEra says that NEI has refused to let them retain access to an industry-wide nuclear personnel database called PADS through March unless the company forks over \$860,000, most which NextEra says are fees related to NEI membership. "NextEra promptly notified NEI that it would not accede to this extortionate and coercive demand," the complaint, filed in the District Court for the Southern District of Florida, West Palm Beach, states. NextEra says that they paid about \$3 million a year in NEI membership fees. The timing is also calculated to inflict pain, according to NextEra, because its St. Lucie nuclear plant is scheduled to begin a refueling operation — a process that relies heavily on PADS for vetting work, and psychological and criminal histories of hundreds of workers brought on-site — this coming Wednesday.

NextEra says it left NEI because the group was backing "bad energy policy" that was out of step with its business and would "unnecessarily harm consumers." NEI's support of Energy Secretary Rick Perry's ill-fated grid resilience proposal was particularly problematic for NextEra, as were the group's support of nuclear at the expense of other forms of generation. "NEI will use that membership fee, in part, to advocate for policies that are directly at odds with the NextEra Companies' interests and bad for the electricity industry as a whole," the company states. In our previous reporting on NEI's drama, we noted that board chairman Don Brandt described NextEra CEO Jim Robo as being "more hardened on his decision" to leave the D.C. trade association than Entergy chief Leo Denault after other utility CEO attempted to dissuade them.

NEI responded saying the claims of the lawsuit was without merit, and said for NextEra to call NEI's approach "retaliatory, or even suggest the notion of extortion, is both counter-factual and offensive to the good faith effort the offer represents." NEI said it reached out to the company in good faith to open a dialogue to help keep the industry "as unified as possible, on regulatory and other policy positions. Unfortunately, rather than even opening a dialogue NextEra immediately followed its rejection of NEI's offer with a baseless lawsuit."

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES: A New Jersey-based home improvement contractor who is married to a former household staffer of Donald and Melania Trump is now working as an EPA official, POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia reports. Steve Kopec joined EPA's Region 2 office in

New York as a special assistant on Dec. 18, according to a memo obtained by POLITICO. "Steve comes to us from private industry, where he fashioned his career around customer service and organizational efficiencies," EPA Region 2 Administrator Pete Lopez wrote in the memo. "Steve is an experienced manager with skills in team building, management and organization." Andrew reports via public records that Kopec previously ran a contracting business from his home in Haskell, N.J., called Steve's Tools in Motion. His wife Dagmara previously worked for the Trump family in New York, according to a person familiar with her situation. Read [it here](#).

RYDER NOMINATED FOR TVA: The president will nominate Memphis attorney John Ryder to the last open seat on the board of directors for the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Times Free Press [reports](#) Ryder, who will need to be confirmed by the Senate, has "served as general counsel at the Republican National Committee for the past five years and is a long-time GOP activist." Tennessee Sen. [Lamar Alexander](#), a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said he was glad to see the news. Ryder "understands that TVA's mission is to continue to provide cheap, clean, reliable electricity for homes and businesses throughout the seven-state Tennessee Valley region," he said.

U.S. CONSIDERING VENEZUELAN OIL RESTRICTIONS: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Sunday the U.S. is considering restricting Venezuelan crude oil imports and exports of U.S. refined products to Venezuela, in order to apply pressure on President Nicolas Maduro to "return to the constitution," Reuters reports. "One of the aspects of considering sanctioning oil is what effect would it have on the Venezuelan people? Is it a step that might bring this to an end more rapidly?" Tillerson said at a news conference, referring to Venezuela's economic and political crisis. More [here](#).

A FRIENDLY WAGER: With the Eagles' Super Bowl win in the books, FERC Commissioner Cheryl LaFleur owes Robert Powelson some lobsters. Powelson [tweeted](#) on Friday that the pair should up their Super Bowl wager, which originally had the loser wear the winning team's jersey to their February open meeting. LaFleur [tweeted](#) she'd bet two Maine lobsters, to which Powelson [said](#) he'd offer up "(2) Kobe beef cheesesteaks and add a case of Victory IPA to wash them down." LaFleur [agreed](#) to those new terms, adding she would add beverages as well, likely Sam Adams. After the game, Powelson [tweeted](#) an invite to Commissioner Neil Chatterjee, after he [tweeted his own support](#) for the Patriots. "Commish, please join me in Philly for the parade. Love to host you! Fly Eagles Fly!" he said.

GOT KIGALI ON MY MIND: The Trump administration last year announced rare support for an international agreement that would reduce a greenhouse gas, but it still has a heavy lift ahead. The Hudson Institute will go over the details of the status of the amendment, including discussion of getting two-thirds of the Senate to approve it (and when the administration should submit it), and possibly also how the federal government will implement the treaty if approved. The D.C. Circuit rejected EPA's use of the Clean Air Act to implement reductions of hydrofluorocarbons, leaving supporters considering the Toxic Substances Control Act as an alternative. **If you go:** Hudson Institute, 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 400, at 9 a.m.

EXXON'S CLIMATE BOTTOM LINE: Exxon Mobil released its 2-degree scenario report late Friday, finding that even under aggressive climate policies there would be "little risk" to its

investments. The report has been sought by shareholders who have been asking what the effect of policies — like the Paris climate agreement — might have on the company's bottom line. "Based on currently anticipated production schedules, we estimate that by 2040, over 90 percent of our year-end 2016 proved reserves will have been produced," the Friday report said. "Considering that the 2°C Scenarios Average implies significant use of oil and natural gas through the middle of the century, we believe these reserves face little risk." Read the report [here](#).

BREAKING DOWN THE FUEL MIX: Data from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association show "electric cooperatives' retail fuel mix nationwide is trending toward natural gas and renewable energy resources and away from coal-based generation." In a news post explaining the trend, NRECA writes that the share of co-op electricity from coal was 41 percent in 2016. That's compared with 54 percent in 2014, according to NRECA's research. According to the recently released research from Lauren Khair, NRECA regional economic analyst, and Michael Leitman, NRECA strategic analyst, "as coal use decreased, natural gas rose from 18 percent in 2014 to 26 percent in 2016" and the "share of renewable energy resources (non-hydro) doubled from 4 percent to 8 percent for the same period." Read [more](#).

CALIFORNIA SCHEMIN': California is readying itself to fight back if the Trump administration tries to stop it from its tough focus on emissions, Bloomberg's Mark Chediak, Dana Hull and John Lippert report. During a Bloomberg New Energy Finance event Friday, Mary Nichols, chairman of the California Air Resources Board, said she thought "there would be a war with many states lining up with California" if the state's rule-setting waiver is revoked. More [here](#).

— **The Energy Information Administration broke down** California's plans on Friday to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030. More [here](#).

HEADS UP: The House will consider a few bills today under suspension of the rules, including: [H.R. 2371 \(115\)](#), the Western Area Power Administration Transparency Act; [H.R. 2888 \(115\)](#), the Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park Establishment Act; [S. 1438 \(115\)](#), the Gateway Arch National Park Designation Act and [H.R. 219 \(115\)](#), the Swan Lake Hydroelectric Project Boundary Correction Act.

BILL SPOTLIGHT: Sens. [John Boozman](#), [Jim Inhofe](#), [Cory Booker](#) and [Dianne Feinstein](#) introduced bipartisan legislation Friday to modernize investment in water infrastructure and amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014. The "Securing Required Funding for Water Infrastructure Now (SRF WIN) Act," [S. 2364 \(115\)](#), in part would authorize \$200 million annually over five years to support state revolving fund projects exclusively, and would allow thousands of vetted drinking water and wastewater projects to receive funding, effectively eliminating the need for EPA to process the loan applications.

TELECOM GOES GREEN: Following news from T-Mobile that it set a goal to achieve 100 percent renewable energy for powering its networks by 2021, AT&T has hinted it will do the same. The company [tweeted](#) last week that it "just signed a couple of the industry's largest renewable energy deals," with more details to come. Todd Larsen, executive co-director of consumer and corporate engagement at Green America, which has called on AT&T to move to

100 percent renewables, said they welcome the news. "We are pleased that AT&T is listening to the thousands of consumers who have encouraged the company to pursue clean energy and to join the other 123 [RE100](#) companies who have made the '100 percent renewable' pledge," Larson said.

MAIL CALL: Maine Sens. [Susan Collins](#) and [Angus King](#) urged leaders on the Finance committee to include language from the Biomass Thermal Utilization Act — which would qualify biomass heating equipment for renewable energy tax credits — in any tax extender legislation. Read the letter [here](#).

QUICK HITS

— Perry certain SRS has 'very bright' future ahead of it, [Aiken Standard](#).

— High-ranking Trump official attends hunting convention, [The Hill](#).

— Trump official discusses offshore drilling with governor, legislators in separate meetings, [The News & Observer](#).

— OSHA standards moot in Quinton rig explosion because of exemption for oil-and-gas industry, [Tulsa World](#).

— Document reveals ambitious reorganization timeline, [E&E News](#).

HAPPENING THIS WEEK

MONDAY

9:00 a.m. — The Hudson Institute [forum](#) on hydrofluorocarbons and the Kigali treaty, 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. — Johns Hopkins University [hosts](#) EIA Administrator Linda Capuano to present the agency's Annual Energy Outlook 2018, 1740 Massachusetts Ave NW

10:00 a.m. — House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee [hearing](#) on "DOE Modernization: Advancing the Economic and National Security Benefits of America's Nuclear Infrastructure," 2123 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources [hearing](#) on various bills, 366 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — House Natural Resources Federal Lands Subcommittee [hearing](#) on national monument bills, 1324 Longworth

11:00 a.m. — The National Association of State Energy Officials holds its [Energy Policy](#)

Outlook Conference, 2401 M St NW

2:00 p.m. — House Natural Resources Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs Subcommittee hearing on tribal land bills, 1324 Longworth

WEDNESDAY

9:30 a.m. — Senate Environment and Public Works Committee business meeting to consider Andrew Wheeler's nomination to be deputy administrator of EPA, 406 Dirksen.

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee hearing on various bills, 366 Dirksen

12:00 p.m. — The Women's Council on Energy and the Environment hosts a "lunch and learn," 1055 Thomas Jefferson St NW

THURSDAY

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on "Energy Infrastructure," 366 Dirksen

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. — The National Capital Chapter of the U.S. Energy Economists hosts its February lunch, 425 7th St NW

12:30 p.m. — Johns Hopkins University discussion of energy policy in India and the role of coal, 1619 Massachusetts Ave NW

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/02/not-just-democrats-blocking-trump-nominees-092892>

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McConnell floats rules change to limit debate on nominations[Back](#)

By Elana Schor | 10/31/2017 04:07 PM EDT

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) suggested on Tuesday that he would support a rules change limiting Democrats' ability to delay confirmation of President Donald Trump's nominees.

Although they cannot filibuster Trump's nominees because of previous rules changes, Democrats

have tied up the Senate floor with lengthy confirmation debates — from Cabinet nominees to a series of less-senior names whose approvals were delayed during the tense battle over Obamacare repeal.

McConnell has committed to maintaining the Senate minority's power to filibuster legislation, but on Tuesday he left the door open to backing further limits on Democratic slowdowns of the confirmation process.

The consideration process for presidential nominees "is a different matter" than the legislative filibuster, McConnell said, lambasting recent Democratic slowdowns as "just simply ridiculous."

McConnell's protest rings hollow for Democrats who keenly recall his obstruction of former President Barack Obama's nominees, including Judge Merrick Garland's failure to get a hearing after Obama nominated him to the Supreme Court.

"Sen. McConnell does not come to the court with clean hands on these issues," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) told reporters when asked about the Kentucky Republican's suggestion of a future rules change. "He delayed and blocked so many of Obama's nominees."

Schumer, like many of his fellow Democrats, also noted that Trump already has gotten more judges confirmed to the federal bench than Obama did at the same point in his presidency, despite the GOP's push for a faster pace of confirmations.

McConnell cited a proposal crafted by Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) that would limit the minority's power to run out the clock after debate has been formally curtailed. Lankford began floating the idea in April as Democrats forced a procedural showdown over the confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch — who occupies the seat Garland had been nominated to fill.

The Senate currently has 30 hours of floor time to discuss a nominee after cloture is invoked to limit debate, and Lankford's plan would limit that to 8 hours.

McConnell said on Tuesday that "there may be a possibility to adjust" the amount of time Democrats have to prolong floor debate on nominees after cloture is invoked "in a way more consistent with the Senate, and the administration getting its positions filled in a timely fashion."

McConnell suggested that Lankford is seeking Democratic buy-in for the rules change, and Lankford said through a spokesman: "Conversations with my colleagues about my proposal have been positive. The American people expect us to get more work done."

But another member of GOP leadership said that bipartisanship shouldn't be a requirement in order to limit the minority's ability to force lengthy confirmation debates.

If Democrats don't scale back their delays, "I think we should do whatever is necessary, either with cooperation or without, to stop that procedure from being used to keep us from the other work we need to do," said Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt, No. 5 in Republican leadership. "It's

obvious that's what they're doing."

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Friendly fire imperils some of GOP's own nominees[Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 02/05/2018 05:03 AM EDT

Blocking President Donald Trump's nominees is a bipartisan affair.

While Republicans have blamed Democratic obstruction for keeping positions at federal agencies from being filled by confirmed officials, some GOP lawmakers are standing in the way too. At least 11 Republican senators have disclosed holds on nominees for agencies including the departments of Energy, Agriculture and State.

It's not an unusual tactic as senators frequently use whatever leverage they have to extract policy concessions from federal agencies, but it's notable especially as senior Republicans have raised [the possibility of changing](#) Senate rules due to the nomination backlog. And the hold ups are causing intra-party frustration for making an already arduous confirmation process even more difficult.

Most recent to slap a hold on a Trump nominee is Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman [John Barrasso](#) (R-Wyo.) — who blamed Democrats in November for turning the Senate "into the world's most paralyzed deliberative body" — when he announced his hold on an Energy nominee over the agency's practice of selling excess government-controlled uranium onto the market.

"You were unable to give me a firm commitment to immediately halt these barterers, something that [Energy Secretary Rick] Perry has told me he wants to do," Barrasso told Anne White at her Jan. 18 nomination hearing to be assistant secretary for environmental management. "So for this reason, I am unable to support a confirmation at this time and withhold the confirmation until the department ends its practice of bartering excess uranium."

A spokeswoman for Barrasso declined further comment on the hold or how it's different than the tactics used by Democrats that the Wyoming Republican has frequently bashed.

Senate Energy Chairman [Lisa Murkowski](#) (R-Alaska) said her fellow Republicans should "knock it off," calling intra-party holds "silly."

Holds lost some power after Senate Democrats in 2013 invoked the so-called [nuclear option](#) for most nominees, allowing them to be confirmed by a simple majority, and Republicans expanded that approach to Supreme Court nominees last year.

But because the Senate operates almost entirely based on unanimous consent, a single senator can still threaten to significantly gum up the procedural works if his or her hold is not honored. And with Republicans holding only 51 seats, a GOP senator's objection carries even more weight.

It's hard to make broad conclusions about holds because they can be placed on nominees for any reason and don't always have to be disclosed, although the Senate has taken some steps to add transparency to the process. A resolution passed in 2011 requires senators to make public their holds on nominees or legislation if they submit written objections to party leaders. During the 2011-12 session of Congress, 24 objections were published, but that number fell to nine the following session and rose to 34 in the 2015-16 session, according to the Congressional Research Service.

In 2017, the first half of the current congressional session, eight objections were published, half of which came from Iowa Republican Chuck Grassley, according to a POLITICO review of the Congressional Record.

Those numbers are not comprehensive, CRS warns, noting that senators do not have to publish their plans if they tell leaders in person or over the phone that they would put a hold on a nominee. Several other Republicans announced holds last year that were not included in the Congressional Record.

Ted Cruz is objecting to an Agriculture Department nominee to push for changes to national ethanol policy. Dean Heller, an opponent of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, is blocking a nominee to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Cory Gardner is blocking Justice Department nominees over marijuana policy. Majority Whip John Cornyn blocked the nominee for the number two spot at OMB over Hurricane Harvey relief funding. John McCain placed holds on several Defense nominees over inadequate information on wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Tim Scott announced a hold on Trump's trade nominee to draw attention to issues in his state. Sen. Thom Tillis is standing in the way of a DHS nominee to pressure the agency on immigration. Todd Young stalled a State Department nominee to force action related to Saudi Arabia and Yemen. And Rand Paul put his own hold on a DOJ nominee over his past work on NSA surveillance. There may be even more anonymous holds that have not drawn as much attention.

Democrats occasionally engaged in some of the same tactics during the Obama presidency. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), for example, placed separate holds on Obama's FDA nomination in January 2016 over his ties to the drug industry and handling of the opioid epidemic. Markey and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) placed a hold on a Democratic FCC nominee back in November 2016 as well.

This is an "uncommon period" for intra-party holds that suggests some lawmakers feel they aren't being given adequate input into some of the agency selections, according to Joshua Huder, a senior fellow at the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University.

"Holds have definitely lost their partisan edge certainly. They haven't gone away," Huder said.

But, he added, it is "virtually impossible to tell which holds are because they have personal differences with a nominee and when they're holding something up for leverage on something else."

Last fall, delays in confirming EPA picks led [Jim Inhofe](#) to place his own hold on a FERC nominee, Democrat Rich Glick, that had the impact of snarling an entire package of carefully negotiated Energy, Interior and FERC nominees. Inhofe eventually lifted his hold in early November, [allowing the confirmation](#) of a pair of FERC commissioners.

Cruz slapped a hold on Bill Northey for a senior USDA post last fall after several corn-state Republican peers blocked consideration of several EPA picks in committee as part of an effort to extract concessions on the Renewable Fuel Standard. That prompted Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to describe the delay in confirmation as "[pretty crippling, quite frankly](#)." A spokesman for Cruz didn't respond to request for comment on what he would need to lift his hold.

Heller placed his own hold on GOP NRC nominee Annie Caputo last summer. His office declined to comment on the status of the hold, though Caputo remains waiting for Senate action.

Congressional veterans aren't surprised by the tactics that can be used to extract policy concessions or commitments from federal agencies.

"Elected officials will frequently use whatever leverage is available to accomplish political goals they deem to be important," former Kentucky Rep. Ed Whitfield told POLITICO in an email.

Robert Dillon, a former aide for Murkowski, said Republicans are "not monolithic" and senators will push for the interests of their states even when their positions on nominations are "at odds with leadership."

Several senators said the hold process was something for each lawmaker to navigate on their own and supported the right to block nominations, even those that came from their own party.

"Every senator has the reason and prerogative to put holds no matter which party the president comes from," [Steve Daines](#) (R-Mont.) told POLITICO. "I respect — but may not always agree — with where my fellow senators may land on these issues."

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Carper vows to block EPA nominees until White withdraws[Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 01/30/2018 01:14 PM EDT

Sen. [Tom Carper](#) (D-Del.) told EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt today that he will work to block two key EPA nominees until President Donald Trump withdraws his controversial nominee to lead the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

"I made it clear that those nominations were going to find it difficult to move forward expeditiously as long as the nomination of Kathleen Hartnett White was still out there," Carper told reporters after a brief private conversation with Pruitt following a hearing. White, who has questioned climate science and criticized anti-pollution regulations, would not be directly connected to EPA, but leading CEQ would give her broad influence over environmental policy across the administration.

The EPA nominations in question are Andrew Wheeler to be deputy administrator and Holly Greaves to be chief financial officer. Carper declined to say whether Wheeler's past lobbying work, particularly for coal producer Murray Energy, would threaten his nomination as well.

Carper has criticized White since she appeared before the committee last year and gave what he called "perhaps the worst performance I've seen in 17 years." White has stalled as Democrats seek the two moderate Republican votes needed to quash her nomination.

Pruitt "said he'd think about that and maybe we'd have a chance to talk further down the road," Carper told reporters.

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DOE rule offers nuclear industry much-wanted attention[Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 11/21/2017 05:00 AM EDT

The nuclear industry may be a collateral winner in President Donald Trump's effort to end the "war on coal."

Nuclear power plant owners spent much of the past decade at odds with their coal-fired peers over climate change, but now they have found their fates intertwined thanks to the Trump administration's view that protecting the old workhorses of the electric grid is key to maintaining a reliable supply of power.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry's proposal to alter electricity markets would be [a boon for coal companies](#) like Murray Energy and the utilities supplied by its mines, but the proposal allows nuclear companies to come along for the ride — welcome relief for an industry that often felt left out of the Obama administration's climate push despite its carbon-free profile.

"It's not surprising to see nuclear energy and coal in there together because they were sort of the odd couple out in the Obama administration. With respect, their focus was on renewables," said David Blee, who heads the U.S. Nuclear Infrastructure Council, a coalition of companies working in the sector. "This administration is making up for lost time in those areas."

The Obama administration disappointed the nuclear industry by not providing much in the way of explicit incentives for existing reactors, despite relying on the carbon-free electricity they provide to hit the Clean Power Plan's emissions reduction target.

But now the Energy Department has drawn nuclear into the new administration's pro-coal fold by basing its grid rule on a characteristic the two technologies share. Perry's proposal calls for consumers to pay power plants operating in regional electricity markets for keeping 90 days of fuel supply onsite. Most coal-fired power plants in the PJM Interconnection could qualify, as would virtually all nuclear plants in those areas because reactors only refuel every 18 to 24 months.

"Maybe in previous administrations there was some support [for nuclear power] but I feel this administration has been much more vocal," Nuclear Energy Institute CEO Maria Korsnick said, noting that one of Perry's first trips as DOE chief was to the long-stalled Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site. "The challenge is how we lever that to make the most of it. This notice of proposed rulemaking is one example of their willingness to put something in play."

Trump and Perry's broadening strategy also may help the Energy Department's grid proposal gain support on Capitol Hill and survive inevitable court challenges.

"If your real focus here is to understand where we are with our baseload generation then you have to put those two together even though they are a pairing that, from an emissions perspective, are very different," said Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski. "I don't know that it makes it a better pairing but it probably does build a broader constituency."

Illinois Rep. John Shimkus, a senior GOP member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, echoed that sentiment. "For me to be able to say it's 'baseload' and say it's coal and nuclear, and have that baseload argument, that's helpful," he said.

FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee, a former top aide to Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) who is now in charge of responding to DOE's proposal, says he wants to put in place an "interim" rule that would keep coal and nuclear plants online until the commission decides on long-term market changes. And he says climate advocates should be cheering the fact that nuclear plants would get a lifeline.

"One of the things that has been perplexing to me about the opposition to the interim step that I'm hoping to take to throw a lifeline to some of these baseload units is if we're going to seriously consider taking steps to mitigate U.S. emissions, nuclear power has to be part of that conversation," he said at a CQ Roll Call event last week. "To me, it seems very short-sighted to simultaneously stress the need to mitigate carbon emissions and not care about maintaining our

nuclear fleet moving forward."

The Trump administration has largely managed to avoid criticism from nuclear backers for its efforts to pull back other federal climate programs that could have benefited the industry. Under Trump they are also getting much-wanted attention to their priorities, such as Yucca Mountain, a comprehensive review of U.S. nuclear energy policy led by the White House, and a conditional commitment to provide additional financing for the over-budget Vogtle nuclear project in Georgia.

"From our perspective, [we see] a real re-commitment to, frankly, the most important clean energy resource in the country," said Rich Powell, the executive director of the ClearPath Foundation, a conservative group that backs low-emissions energy sources.

"They may not call that a climate strategy, or a climate play," Powell added. "But in actuality, that is a very important measure on carbon."

There's also a legal upside of expanding the target audience beyond coal, said Alison Silverstein, an analyst who worked on DOE grid study earlier this year.

"Nuclear is still in the game principally because the secretary glommed onto the term baseload and defined it as coal and nuclear. And there is now ... no way to separate them," she said. "If you are trying to find a legal argument to keep coal plants open with a FERC rule, the broader you can make the applicability, the harder it is to lose an argument that the rule is overly discriminatory."

But Silverstein, a former top aide to ex-FERC Chairman Pat Wood, added: "If I were owning nuclear generation within Entergy, FirstEnergy or Exelon, I'd be keeping my head down and let the coal guys do the work, and seeing what I can get."

Many coal plants, she said, are no longer baseload providers but that "nuclear is the true baseload resource."

For all the talk of aligning coal with nuclear despite their often disparate missions, Illinois Rep. [Bobby Rush](#) said don't expect him or his fellow Democrats to embrace coal anytime soon.

"That was the obvious attempt to protect coal by adding nuclear to it but I don't think that dog's going to hunt," he said. "I don't see any Democrats who want to change their position on coal by the fact of them adding nuclear. I think that, for the foreseeable future, coal is not going to be one of the options."

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Husband of former Trump household aide scores government job [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 02/02/2018 05:53 PM EDT

A home improvement contractor married to one of Donald and Melania Trump's former household staffers is now working as an official at the Environmental Protection Agency, the latest example of someone with a personal connection to the Trump family finding work in the administration.

New Jersey-based Steve Kopec joined EPA's Region 2 office in New York as a special assistant on Dec. 18, according to a memo obtained by POLITICO. "Steve comes to us from private industry, where he fashioned his career around customer service and organizational efficiencies," EPA Region 2 Administrator Pete Lopez wrote in the memo. "Steve is an experienced manager with skills in team building, management and organization."

According to public records, Kopec previously ran a contracting business from his home in Haskell, New Jersey, called Steve's Tools in Motion. Kopec's wife, Dagmara, previously worked for the Trump family in New York, according to a person familiar with her situation.

Photographs posted on Facebook in recent months show the Kopecs visiting the White House and mingling with senior administration officials.

Trump, who appointed his daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner to senior White House roles, has made a habit of appointing people with close ties to his family or businesses rather than experienced policymakers or political hands. His White House social media director, Dan Scavino, started working for him years ago as a caddy, and his first security director, Keith Schiller, traveled with him from the Trump Organization to the White House.

In June, Trump appointed Lynne Patton, a party planner who arranged events at Trump golf courses as well as Eric Trump's 2014 wedding, to head the New York office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Scott Amey, the Project on Government Oversight's general counsel, said there has been a pattern of "questionable hiring" across both Republican and Democratic administrations for decades, noting that presidents' friends and acquaintances often get tapped for ambassadorships and other top job.

But hiring people at government agencies with little relevant experience can backfire, he said.

"If you put friends in high places and they don't have the proper qualifications it can have disastrous results for the agency and for taxpayers," Amey said. "We hope that public service positions are filled with people that are qualified to best serve the public interest."

Steve Kopec did not answer multiple calls to his office line and didn't respond to multiple requests for comment via email. Dagmara Kopec did not respond to multiple emails. Lopez, the EPA Region 2 administrator, also did not respond to questions about the circumstances of Steve

Kopec's hiring.

The White House declined to offer an on-the-record response to questions about Kopec's hiring. "We appreciate Mr. Kopec's service," a White House official said.

It's unclear who made the decision to hire Kopec, or whether EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt was involved. Pruitt, the former Oklahoma state attorney general, has grown close to Trump in recent months and is eyeing other jobs in the administration.

"Mr. Kopec is a hard-working, dedicated employee and we appreciate his service, in supporting environmental protection efforts in New York, New Jersey, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico," EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said in a statement.

An EPA official added that Kopec "performs administrative and support services" for the agency's Region 2 administrator. The official said he isn't writing policy for the agency and does not serve in a technical or scientific role.

Kopec, according to the official, speaks four languages and travels multiple hours a day to the EPA office in New York from his home in New Jersey.

Other administration officials stressed that Kopec does not hold a senior position at the agency, with one official saying he makes \$66,215 a year.

Both Dagmara and Steve Kopec are originally from Poland. Steve often goes by his Polish name, Slawomir.

The Kopecs appear to have made repeated visits to the White House in recent months.

One photo posted in September 2017 shows Dagmara Kopec posing on the South Lawn of the White House with communications director Hope Hicks, counselor Kellyanne Conway and press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Photos from January — including one with Steve Kopec, Melania Trump and the president — appear to be from a White House Christmas party.

Another photo posted by Kopec in September shows a plate of food with the caption, "My first dinner at the White House."

He also posted a photo of himself sitting in a yellow chair in what appeared to be the White House Diplomatic Reception Room. The picture caption reads: "I wait for my guest." It wasn't clear whom he meant.

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by UnitedHealth Group

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

IF YOU HAVE A LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY, this is the week to bring it up, as Congress has its last must-pass bill of the year on the floor. The massive omnibus spending package -- which will fund the government through the end of September -- could include language on everything from campaign finance to pesticides to labor policy. It is scheduled come out today. That will give Congress five days to get it through both chambers. What can go wrong?

Happy Monday. SITUATIONAL AWARENESS: SEN. BOB CORKER (R-TENN.) will meet with **MIKE POMPEO** this afternoon as he begins to make rounds before his confirmation hearings. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which Corker chairs, will hold hearings on Pompeo's nomination for secretary of state in April.

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK ... BIG KAMALA HARRIS PROFILE -- Vogue's April issue: **"Dreaming Big: After a year in Washington, Kamala Harris has proved she doesn't back down from a fight. How far can the star senator go? Abby Aguirre reports":** "[I]n the seventeen months since Donald Trump was elected president, Harris has been propelled into an altogether different stratum of political celebrity-one that raises certain questions about her future. (Questions she is well practiced at deflecting. 'I honestly am focused on 2018,' she tells me when I ask her for her thoughts about a presidential run. But you haven't ruled it out, I say. 'I'm not focused on it,' she repeats.) ...

"Harris has become a force due to her authority on the very issues Trump warps for his own gain: crime and immigration. A robust body of research has established that immigrants are less likely than native-born citizens to commit crimes, including violent ones. As the state's former top cop, Harris knows this better than anyone. From the moment President Trump delivered his inaugural address, linking immigration to crime in a macabre vision of 'American carnage,' Harris was-to put it bluntly-uniquely poised to

call bulls***." <http://bit.ly/2tZaGqX>

-- A BAD HEADLINE IN CALIFORNIA ... L.A. TIMES: "Villaraigosa and his campaigns have benefited from groups that critics say prey upon the poor, people of color" <http://lat.ms/2podW9S>

EARLY AND OFTEN ... SENATE MAJORITY PAC just reported \$301,602 in spending to boost Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) and dump on her opponent, Josh Hawley.

DEPT. OF TRUMPOLOGY ...

-- MAGGIE HABERMAN in the NYT, **"Newly Emboldened, Trump Says What He Really Feels"**: "A dozen people close to Mr. Trump or the White House, including current and former aides and longtime friends, described him as newly emboldened to say what he really feels and to ignore the cautions of those around him. ...

"This could be the manifestation of growing confidence,' said Roger J. Stone Jr., one of the president's oldest confidantes. Projecting strength, control and power, whether as a New York developer or domineering reality television host, has always been vital to Mr. Trump. But in his first year in the White House, according to his friends, he found himself feeling tentative and anxious, intimidated by the role of president, a fact that he never openly admitted but that they could sense, people close to the president said.

"This, after all, is someone for whom leaving the security of Trump Tower and moving to Washington and the White House was a daunting prospect. Even now, as he has grown more comfortable in the job, he rarely leaves the White House unless he is certain the environment will be friendly, such as at one of his own properties. Rallies are rarely scheduled in areas that could invite large protests. ... Some of Mr. Trump's allies have said that Mr. Trump was trapped in a West Wing cage built by Mr. Kelly, and has finally broken loose." <http://nyti.ms/2IAgLx6>

-- OLIVIA NUZZI on the cover of New York Magazine, **"What Hope Hicks Knows: The departure of the Trump whisperer has left the White House in even deeper chaos. Which surely pleases some outsiders angling to get back in"** (headline on the cover: **"White House Snakepit! Tabloid Triangle Rocks Oval Office!" What Hope Hicks Learned in Washington**): "While others were left wondering what the president was thinking, Hicks could often hear him shouting, even with her door closed. 'Hope!' he'd scream. 'Hokey!' 'Hoyster!' 'Get in here!'

"Many requests were mundane. 'He doesn't write anything down,' one source close to the White House told me. ... A second source who meets regularly with the president told me that Hicks acted almost as an embodiment of the faculties the Trump lacked -- like memory. 'He'll be talking, and then right in the middle he'll be like, "Hope, what was that ... thing?"'

"When the name of a senator or congressman or journalist came up, Trump would prompt Hicks to provide a history of their interactions, asking, 'Do we like him?' 'And she f***ing remembers!' (Trump has said his own memory is 'one of the greatest memories of all time.') ... For as long as he'd been in politics, Lewandowski had been defined by two qualities: his ruthless pursuit of an enemy's destruction and always having an enemy. ... There were plenty of reasons for Lewandowski to consider Porter his enemy. Whatever was or wasn't true about his relationship with Hicks, Lewandowski's unusual preoccupation with her was well established. 'He has, sort of, Single White Male characteristics,' a source who had worked with Hicks before the campaign told me.

"In the fall, he began asking around, trying to figure out whom she was dating. 'I think that he thinks he should control her,' a second source said. 'He got wind that she was dating Porter, and he could not handle that,' a third source, who is close to the White House and worked with Lewandowski, said. 'There were still raw feelings.' ...

"[J]ust as Kelly didn't understand Jared and Ivanka, he also didn't understand Hicks, and he sometimes blamed her for habits Trump had been forming for 71 years. 'He was extraordinarily dismissive of her. He would refer to her as 'the high-schooler,' he would joke about how she was inexperienced, she was in over her head, she was immature,' a former senior White House official told me." <http://nym.ag/2tWZOKd> ... **The cover**
<http://bit.ly/2DDz9Bu>

-- OLIVIA TWEETED: "I spent some time with Hope Hicks during the last several weeks. She declined to speak on the record. This is the result of interviews with more than 30 current & former senior White House officials, campaign staffers, & sources close to the president".

******* A message from UnitedHealth Group: Better understand the state-by-state health of women and children.** A new report from America's Health Rankings® identifies areas of success as well as challenges for the health of women, infants and children. Where does your state rank? Find out [here](#). *****

JUST POSTED - "Inside California's War on Trump: As the state resists the White House on issues from immigration to climate change, Governor Jerry Brown is determined to avoid a pitched battle," by Connie Bruck in The New Yorker: "Brown has said that he follows 'the canoe theory' of politics: 'You paddle a little on the left and a little on the right, and you paddle a straight course.' His public image is similarly enigmatic: in the seventies, he dated Linda Ronstadt and Natalie Wood, and yet he managed to project the austerity of a monk. ...

"When I asked [his wife Anne] Gust Brown whether they might launch another campaign instead, she said, 'Who knows? I've learned to just take life as it comes, right?' She added that she thought Brown would be 'an extraordinary President.'" <http://bit.ly/2DCYtYH>

IT HAPPENS TO ALL OF US ... "Engine failure forces Ivanka, Jared's helicopter to

return to airport," by CNN's Noah Gray: "A helicopter carrying Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner had to return to an airport in Washington on Thursday after one of its engines failed, two law enforcement sources told CNN. President Trump's daughter and son-in-law were flying from Washington to New York on Thursday afternoon in a two-engine helicopter when one engine failed, causing the chopper to return to Washington. The helicopter safely made it back to Ronald Reagan National Airport and the couple scrambled to get on a commercial flight instead. The sources could not say why the couple were flying to New York via a helicopter instead of a plane."

<http://cnn.it/2GHaYFG>

COMING ATTRACTIONS ... "White House tweaks plan to seek death penalty as part of opioid response," by Dan Diamond: "President Donald Trump's plan to fight the opioid epidemic will call for the death penalty in some cases, White House officials said Sunday, scaling back the administration's plan to punish drug dealers. 'The Department of Justice will seek the death penalty against drug traffickers when appropriate under current law,' said Andrew Bremberg, the White House's director of the Domestic Policy Council. White House officials referred follow-up questions to DOJ. An earlier version of the plan, obtained by POLITICO last week, would have called for the death penalty in some cases involving drug dealers, too." <http://politi.co/2pnntid>

-- "Hundreds of millions in state opioid cash left unspent," by Rachana Pradhan and Brianna Ehley: "Congress sent states hundreds of millions of dollars to fight an opioid crisis claiming more than 100 lives a day - money they've largely been unable to spend after a year. Mixed signals from the Trump administration on how to use the money and state challenges ramping up their efforts have left untouched more than three-quarters of the \$500 million Congress set aside under the 21st Century Cures Act in late 2016." <http://politi.co/2lAsBY5>

ABOUT MICHAEL FLYNN -- "What Michael Flynn Could Tell the Russia Investigators: The former national security adviser mingled business with government. That could help Robert Mueller look for similar overlaps among Trump insiders," by Bloomberg's David Kocieniewski and Lauren Etter: "Flynn's troubles trace back to a previously unreported million-dollar contract for computer chips forged with a friend, Bijan Kian, a suave, Iranian-born businessman. A former governor at the Export-Import Bank, Kian was chairman of a Persian cultural nonprofit group, the Nowruz Commission, that gave him entrée into high Washington circles.

"He built a relationship with former CIA Director James Woolsey and, in 2013, used it to get Flynn, then the Pentagon's top intelligence officer, to support his computer chip company's bid for a contract. The next year, when Flynn was forced out by the Obama administration, his friendship with Kian blossomed into a business partnership. Kian brought him into the chip company, GreenZone Systems Inc., as a board member." <https://bloom.bg/2HLrfc7>

YOU'RE INVITED ... Join us for our first Playbook University in North Carolina with **GOV. ROY COOPER** on March 29 at Penn Pavilion at Duke University. Doors open at

11:45 a.m. **RSVP** <http://bit.ly/2lqsO09>

TOP TALKER -- RON LAUDER in the **NYT: "Israel's Self-Inflicted Wounds"**: "[T]he Jewish democratic state faces two grave threats that I believe could endanger its very existence. The first threat is the possible demise of the two-state solution. I am conservative and a Republican, and I have supported the Likud party since the 1980s. But the reality is that 13 million people live between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. And almost half of them are Palestinian. If current trends continue, Israel will face a stark choice: Grant Palestinians full rights and cease being a Jewish state or rescind their rights and cease being a democracy. To avoid these unacceptable outcomes, the only path forward is the two-state solution." <http://nyti.ms/2G3ljge>

QUOTE OF THE DAY from **SAUDI ARABIAN PRINCE MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN** to **NORAH O'DONNELL** on **CBS'S "60 MINUTES"**: "As far as my private expenses, I'm a rich person and not a poor person. I'm not Gandhi or Mandela." **Full interview** <http://cbsn.ws/2poWFNM>

REP. MARK POCAN (D-WIS.) on offering **ANDREW MCCABE** a job on MSNBC's **"KASIE DC"** last night: "We actually put a legitimate offer beyond the tweet, which is we have some very nonpartisan work around election integrity. The bottom line is, I think people are just tired of the way this president operates, whether it'd be -- when he tweets like a petulant man-child or when he's a ruthless demagogue, like he is here, you know, to fire someone literally a couple days before their retirement, that's attacking a person and their family, their pension."

"And people are just so tired of that. This president lacks human -- the human qualities of compassion and everything that we expect to have in a president. And he doesn't do it. So, all I'm trying to do is say, look, I don't care if he comes and work for me or anyone, but we should make sure that he has his pension at minimum. And what the president did was just wrong." <http://on.msnbc.com/2DCIDhG>

TRUMP'S MONDAY -- The president and first lady will head to Manchester, N.H. this afternoon. Trump will give a speech at Manchester Community College about combating the opioid crisis. They are scheduled to fly back to D.C. after the speech.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Vice President Mike Pence stands with his hand on his heart as an Air Force carry team moves a transfer case containing the remains of Master Sgt. Christopher J. Raguso at Dover Air Force Base, Del. on March 18. Raguso, 39, of Commack, N.Y., died on March 15 when a U.S. helicopter crashed in western Iraq. | Steve Ruark/AP Photo

SUSAN GLASSER talks with **REP. ADAM SCHIFF (D-CALIF.)** in the latest "Global Politico" podcast. <http://politi.co/2FTxBWh>

CONFIRMATION WATCH ... TOP-ED - JOHN KIRIAKOU in WaPo, "I went to prison for disclosing the CIA's torture. Gina Haspel helped cover it up": "Putting Haspel in charge of the CIA would undo attempts by the agency - and the nation - to repudiate torture. The message this sends to the CIA workforce is simple: Engage in war crimes, in crimes against humanity, and you'll get promoted. Don't worry about the law. Don't worry about ethics. Don't worry about morality or the fact that torture doesn't even work. Go ahead and do it anyway. We'll cover for you. And you can destroy the evidence, too.

...

"Mike Pompeo, the outgoing CIA director and secretary of state designee, has lauded her 'uncanny ability to get things done and inspire those around her.' I'm sure that's true for some. But many of the rest of us who knew and worked with Haspel at the CIA called her 'Bloody Gina.'" <http://wapo.st/2pmPTrK>

2020 WATCH -- "Curtain rises in New Hampshire with president's appearance," by WaPo's John Wagner in Manchester, N.H.: "Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) received a standing ovation from a crowd of business leaders and political junkies here on Friday after decrying the 'degradation of the United States and her values' by the current occupant of the White House. Ohio Gov. John Kasich (R), who ran for the GOP nomination in 2016, will return to the nation's first primary state early next month for a 'fireside chat' at a college in Henniker.

"And on Monday, President Trump -- whose New Hampshire primary win two years ago set him on a course for the presidency -- is slated to make an appearance in the state for the first time since 2016. The next presidential primaries here are nearly two years away, but the unusual flurry of activity is stoking speculation about whether a sitting president could face a serious challenge from within his own party for the first time in a quarter-century. ... 'I'm certain that Trump will draw a serious primary challenger,' said Fergus Cullen, a former chairman of the New Hampshire Republican State Committee. 'A lot of voters are getting tired of this act.'" <http://wapo.st/2FJYmjY>

******* A message from UnitedHealth Group: Better understand the state-by-state health of women and children.** America's Health Rankings® Health of Women and Children Report assesses 62 health indicators - including those that examine behaviors, community and environmental conditions, policy, clinical care and outcome indicators - to better understand the changing health of women and children across the country and state-by-state. Community leaders, public health officials and policy-makers can help build healthier communities by better understanding the health of those they serve.

[Learn more.](#) *****

MAGGIE SEVERNS: "The biggest Republican megadonor you've never heard of": "Richard Uihlein [is] a little-known Republican donor who had until recently been one of [Illinois Gov. Bruce] Rauner's biggest supporters. After a fallout out with the governor

over abortion policy, Uihlien gave \$2.5 million to Ives in a single week this past January - essentially bankrolling her campaign to defeat Rauner in a Republican primary on Tuesday.

"It's the latest example of Uihlein's burgeoning role as one of the most influential, but still little-known, political donors in the country. His early six- and seven-figure contributions to emerging Republican candidates, and penchant for disruptive politics, have been crucial to building a raft of anti-establishment Republicans seeking to emulate Donald Trump's formula for success during this year's midterm elections.

"And Republicans say he has found a pitch-perfect political moment to push his rigorous social and economic conservatism on the national stage, to the detriment of opponents, like Rauner, who cross his path." <http://politi.co/2pqL9BI>

MEDIAWATCH -- Per Michael Calderone's Morning Media: "Brian Bennett, currently White House reporter at the Los Angeles Times, is joining Time magazine as senior White House correspondent, according to a staff memo."

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Eric Trump leaving Aspen Sunday morning on a United flight to Chicago ... Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper departing the Sunday afternoon matinee showing of "Hamilton" at the Buell Theatre in Denver with his son Teddy and wife, Robin Pringle ... Lynda and Chuck Robb celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary with a black tie dinner at their McLean home Saturday night - their actual wedding day was Dec. 9, 1967. ... Gen. Joe Dunford with a "bunch of friends laughing and enjoying himself" outside The Smith on Sunday.

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- TRANSITION: Sally Canfield is joining Definers Public Affairs as SVP. She most recently was senior director of government relations at the ONE Campaign and is the former deputy chief of staff to Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.).

ENGAGED - JEB ALUMNI -- Mike Thom, deputy director of Iowa for Jeb 2016 who is now regional political director for the NRCC, on Sunday night proposed to **Emily Benavides**, traveling press secretary for Jeb 2016 who is now deputy communications director for Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), at sunset on a walk around the waterfront at Navy Yard. The couple met in Iowa when Tim Miller sent Emily to work the caucus in 2016. **Instapics** <http://bit.ly/2FKhFcO>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Andrew McCabe turned 5-0 ... Joe Dougherty, director of comms at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, turned 53

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Jill Abramson, columnist for The Guardian, senior lecturer at the Harvard English Dept., author of an upcoming book on news, and former

executive editor of The New York Times. **How she got her start in journalism:** "I got my start in journalism from Francine Sasso in the Boston bureau of Time Magazine in 1974. I covered the Harvard campus as a stringer and the 1976 primaries in NH, Massachusetts and RI for Time's Boston bureau and worked there one year 1976-77. Francine got me the Harvard stringer's job and gave me my assignments, which often involved calling John Kenneth Galbraith to ask him if the West was in decline. I collaborated on a piece about campus humor with the Yale stringer, Jane Mayer." **Read her Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2ppvqCy>

BIRTHDAYS: Zach Parkinson, WH deputy research director and director of vetting (hat tip: Adam Kennedy) ... Ed Rollins is 75 ... Teddy Downey ... Brent Scowcroft, former White House national security adviser, is 93 ... Trey Hardin, founder of War Room Strategies and ABC News political analyst who calls him a "member of GOP establishment" in his bio on Twitter, is 49 ... Lynda Johnson Robb ... Politico's James Benson and Betsy Barrows ... Kayla Cook Brown, chief of staff at Axios ... C-SPAN is 39 ... Rep. Mike Coffman (R-Colo.) is 63 ... Alexander Trowbridge, producer for Stephen Colbert's "Late Show" ... CBS News' Kia Baskerville ... Anatole Jenkins, deputy national field director at the DCCC, is 27 ... Van Scott of ABC News ... Kivvit's Ian Hainline (h/t Mallory Shelbourne) ... Leonard Lauder is 85 ... Annie Policastro, director of federal gov't affairs at UPS ... Ric Cunningham ... Kyle Hill, senior LA for Rep. Suzan DelBene (D-Wash.) (h/t Mitchell Rivard) ... Ali Chartan, director at Powell Tate/Weber Shandwick ... Tara McGuinness ... WashPost reporter Sarah Pulliam Bailey ... Katie Bosland, a coordinating producer at ABC News' GMA ... David Colton ...

... **Carla Frank**, finance manager at American Possibilities PAC, is 27 (h/t Rob Flaherty) ... Grace Hoefer ... Andy Wong ... John Gossel ... Doug Hill, director of outreach for Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.) ... Nishant Surapaneni ... Joel Rogers ... Emma Lieberth ... Scott Bates ... ProPublica senior investigative reporter T. Christian Miller ... Mary Streett ... Kate Gordon ... Liz Plank ... Jen Gerson Uffalussy ... Rob Varsalone ... Jerry Fritz ... Maria Osborn Howard ... TVNewser contributor Alissa Krinsky ... Dave Arnold of Saudi Aramco ... Cody Sigel ... Michael Makarski ... Seth Rogovoy of the Rogovoy Report ... Jen Gerson Uffalussy ... Nataly Morales of Sen. Murray's office ... Bernard Schmit ... Yujin Lee ... Jose Borjon ... Jake Westlin ... Joseph Puente ... Angela Ellard.

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by UC Davis

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)) and ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

Good Thursday afternoon. HOUSE REPUBLICANS are holding a half day retreat on tax reform next Wednesday. Transportation will be provided for members. Location TBD. "Tax reform is the most important thing we can do right now to help American families get ahead, and as we move forward we want to make sure members have ample opportunity to talk through our framework, ask questions, and offer feedback," said conference spokesman Nate Hodson.

FOR YOUR RADAR -- PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP told reporters "we will be putting more sanctions on North Korea," per today's pooler Brian Bennett of the L.A. Times. He later announced an executive order that will target individuals, companies and banks that are involved with trade with North Korea. "Foreign banks will face a clear choice: do business with the United States or facilitate trade with the lawless regime in North Korea," Trump said. "The regime can no longer count on others to facilitate its trade and banking activities." ***More from Nolan McCaskill and Louis Nelson***
<http://politi.co/2wD2JIY>

-- **Treasury Secretary STEVEN MNUCHIN** and U.N. Ambassador **NIKKI HALEY** are both scheduled to give on camera briefings this afternoon. Mnuchin's briefing is scheduled for 3 p.m. and Haley's for 4:30 p.m.

TRUMP also said he would visit Puerto Rico following the storm.

HMM -- "Trump hires campaign workers instead of farm experts at USDA," by Jenny Hopkinson: "A POLITICO review of dozens of résumés from political appointees to USDA shows the agency has been stocked with Trump campaign staff and volunteers who in many cases demonstrated little to no experience with federal policy, let alone deep roots in agriculture. But of the 42 résumés POLITICO reviewed, 22 cited Trump campaign experience. And based on their résumés, some of those appointees appear to lack credentials, such as a college degree, required to qualify for higher government salaries.

"It's typical for presidents to reward loyalists with jobs once a campaign is over. But what's different under Trump, sources familiar with the department's inner workings say, is the number of campaign staffers who have gotten positions and the jobs and salaries they have been hired for, despite not having solid agricultural credentials in certain cases. An inexperienced staff can lead to mistakes and sidetrack a president's agenda, the sources say." <http://politi.co/2wB0ndL>

HEADLINES TRUMP LIKES -- "Trump's Bipartisan Outreach Gets Strong Support in New Poll," by WSJ's Janet Hook: "The poll found 71% of adults in the U.S. approved and 8% disapproved of Mr. Trump bypassing GOP leaders to strike a short-term spending deal with Congress's Democratic leaders, Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York and Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California. Meanwhile, the GOP president's job approval rating edged up for the first time since the spring, rising 3 percentage points to 43%. That is still the lowest mark for modern presidents at this point in their first term." <http://on.wsj.com/2yslx9Q>

SPICER'S BACK -- "Another potential Mueller honey pot: Spicer's notebooks," by Axios' Mike Allen: "Former colleagues of Sean Spicer tell Axios that he filled 'notebook after notebook' during meetings at the [RNC], later at the Trump campaign, and then at the White House. When Spicer worked at the RNC, he was said to have filled black books emblazoned with the party's seal. Spicer was so well-known for his copious notes that underlings joked about him writing a tell-all."

-- **Weird nugget:** Spicer threatened Mike with legal action if he continued to contact him. "When we texted Spicer for comment on his note-taking practices, he replied: 'Mike, please stop texting/emailing me unsolicited anymore.' When I replied with a '?' (I have known Spicer and his wife for more than a dozen years), he answered: 'Not sure what that means. From a legal standpoint I want to be clear: Do not email or text me again. Should you do again I will report to the appropriate authorities.'" <http://bit.ly/2ysiH63>

-- **"Sean Spicer defends brief WH tenure: I 'don't think' I lied to American people,"** by ABC News' Catherine Thorbecke <http://abcn.ws/2wB9NWq>

SALLY YATES will be a "distinguished lecturer from government" at Georgetown Law for its fall semester. <http://bit.ly/2yt6uOj>

***** **A message from UC Davis:** As the No. 1 agricultural university in the nation, UC Davis understands how food touches every living thing and what's at stake if we don't answer its challenges. Our research innovations and partnerships with farms, industry and policymakers around the world help ensure healthy, safe food for all. Learn more at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

OUR BAD -- An item in this morning's Playbook said Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) was spotted at the Hamilton last night. She was actually in Maine, not D.C.

DRAIN THE SWAMP! -- "Trump Campaign Alums Launch a New Firm With a Conspicuous Name and a Desperate Client," by The Daily Beast's Lachlan Markay: "Is a three-wheeled car technically an automobile? A pair of former Trump campaign officials are trying to convince the federal government that it is as they flaunt their ties to the president on behalf of their new client. Mike Rubino and Jason Osborne, two high-level Trump campaign operatives, recently launched a lobbying firm with a conspicuous name. Turnberry Solutions is based in D.C.

"But its title evokes the Scottish town that is famously home to one of President Donald Trump's golf clubs. Last month, the firm registered its first client, a financially plagued automotive company named Elio Motors that is operating a former General Motors plant in Louisiana. Elio is trying to secure federal handouts to keep its three-wheeled 'auto-cycles' in production, and lobbying disclosure filings indicate the company has enlisted Turnberry to qualify those vehicles for those handouts."
<http://thebea.st/2hj0JyJ>

WAR REPORT -- "1,200 Bragg paratroopers deployed to Afghanistan," by The Fayetteville Observer's Drew Brooks: "Approximately 2,200 soldiers, including 1,200 from the 82nd Airborne Division, began quietly deploying this month, part of a long-discussed troop surge that involves more than 3,000 U.S. service members on top of the more than 10,000 already serving in Afghanistan.

"The local soldiers -- part of the 1st Brigade Combat Team -- were alerted to the mission earlier this month and quickly deployed. Once in Afghanistan, they will be reunited with their brigade leadership and about 1,500 soldiers from the brigade who deployed to Afghanistan earlier this year. The remaining paratroopers will come from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, which is based in Alaska."
<http://bit.ly/2ytuQQn>

-- "For the first time, the Marine Corps expects to have a female infantry officer among its ranks," by WaPo's Dan Lamothe <http://wapo.st/2ytojNe>

MORE ON CABINET TRAVEL -- AP's Maria Danilova: "Education Department Press Secretary Liz Hill says in a statement to The Associated Press that [Education Secretary Betsy] DeVos travels 'on personally-owned aircraft.' The arrangement comes at 'zero cost to U.S. taxpayers,' as the secretary does not seek or accept any reimbursement for the flights." <http://bit.ly/2ytAz0r>

SPECIAL ELECTION WATCH -- MICHAEL SCHERER in WaPo, "Roy Moore disrupts Alabama Senate race -- and prepares for new level of defiance in Washington": "The central argument of Moore's campaign is that removing the sovereignty of a Christian God from the functions of government is an act of apostasy, an affront to the biblical savior as well as the Constitution. Among the prices he says this country has paid for denying God's supremacy: the high murder rate in Chicago, crime on the streets of Washington, child abuse, rape and sodomy. It's a crisis he hopes to address next year from the floor of the Senate. ...

"He also acts nothing like a professional political candidate. During the final days of a brutal campaign, which has featured withering, daily television and direct-mail assaults on his character, he invited a reporter to spend hours alone with him traveling through the state. Unstaffed by campaign aides and tethered to the outside world only by a flip-phone, Moore offered a seat in his family's pew for Sunday church services, welcomed a tag-along when he visited with his 90-year-old mother, gave a tour of his home and property in rural Gallant and then offered to speak on the record for a two-hour drive, with a quick stop for lunch with his wife, Kayla, at a roadside Cracker Barrel, where they both ordered the Sunday Homestyle Chicken." <http://wapo.st/2ysWyV0>

-- **"Senate candidate Roy Moore in 2005: 'Homosexual conduct should be illegal',"** by CNN's Nathan McDermott and Andrew Kaczynski <http://cnn.it/2wBHp6N>

-- **The President** will attend a campaign rally in Alabama Friday for Sen. Luther Strange.

ACELA CORRIDOR ALERT -- "Amtrak now runs on Dunkin'," by WTOP's Jeff Clabaugh: "Dunkin' Donuts coffee will be served all day in First Class and in Cafe cars on all Northeast Regional trains, a route that includes more than 50 stops between Richmond and Boston. The trains will also use the same equipment Dunkin' Donuts restaurants use 'to ensure the same high quality and great taste,' Amtrak said." <http://bit.ly/2wCaIWL>

PLAYBOOK METRO SECTION -- "The reign of beige: In a political town, design stays neutral," by WaPo's Jura Koncius: "Washington is a city driven by politics and drenched in tradition, and it's no surprise that century-old rowhouses have a decidedly untrendy aesthetic. But even the area's loft condos, McMansions, mid-century ranches and suburban townhouses tend to keep to a neutral palette for walls and sofas -- white, gray, taupe or the proverbial beige -- with homeowners letting their accessories, artwork and personalities provide the color and tell their story.

"Washingtonians aren't serial redecorators; they freshen up by changing pillows, updating lampshades and switching slipcovers, but the core pieces of the home have to outlast trends. 'It's still a very safe look here,' says longtime Washington designer Frank Babb Randolph, who decorated the official vice president's residence for the Cheneys. 'There is a core of people here who don't want to be in vogue or in the moment.'" <http://wapo.st/2yufC5o>

BOOK ALERT -- "Ex-SC Dem chair, GOP strategist team up for bipartisan book," by the AP's Meg Kinnard: "South Carolina's former Democratic Party chairman [Jaime Harrison has announced] that he is co-authoring a book with a former GOP staffer about what it takes to build a Capitol Hill career. 'Climbing the Hill: How to Build a Career in Government and Make a Difference' is being published by Ten Speed Press/Penguin Random House, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, with plans for a fall 2018 release ... Harrison's co-author is Amos Snead, a founding member of S-3 Public Affairs

and spokesman for former House Republican Whip Roy Blunt of Missouri."

<http://bit.ly/2ysy7qG>

SPOTTED: Former Sen. John Breaux (D-La.), now at Squire Patton Boggs, playing a little tennis with Venus Williams and Martina Hingis during the Greenbrier Champions Tennis Classic at the Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va. - **pic**

<http://bit.ly/2fdUKqL>

TRANSITIONS -- Brian Kaissi is leaving the Asian American Hotel Owners Association to work on education and labor issues for Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.).

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - OBAMA ALUMNI -- Will Ragland, managing director of the war room at the Center for American Progress Action Fund and an Obama Education Dept. alum, and **Liz Schaefer**, a civics teacher with Fairfax County Public Schools, recently welcomed Zoey Anne Ragland. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2xxVHEK>

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by Better Medicare Alliance

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Good Tuesday afternoon. MESSAGE FROM THE WHITE HOUSE: Raj Shah of the White House press office emailed us this morning to clarify that the Trump administration **DOES NOT** want to talk about immigration policy -- fixing DACA and building the border wall -- in tomorrow's Capitol Hill meeting with top Congressional leaders.

"[T]he focus is on setting budget caps, not immigration or some of these other issues which are on this month's overall agenda but not driving the substance of this meeting," Shah told us ... **LINDSAY WALTERS**, deputy W.H. press secretary, sent a note to the pooler, which noted: "Marc Short and Mick Mulvaney look forward to meeting on the Hill tomorrow to discuss budget caps with Congressional leaders Ryan, McConnell, Schumer and Pelosi."

FROM THE PRESIDENT THIS MORNING -- "Democrats are doing nothing for DACA - just interested in politics. DACA activists and Hispanics will go hard against Dems, will start 'falling in love' with Republicans and their President! We are about RESULTS."

-- **OF COURSE**, the reality is, Democrats have the leverage to tie all these issues together because their votes are likely going to be needed to complete all the lingering issues this month. And they told us they certainly want to discuss DACA with the administration tomorrow.

TRUMP TAKES CREDIT FOR PLANES NOT CRASHING -- **@realDonaldTrump**: "Since taking office I have been very strict on Commercial Aviation. Good news - it was just reported that there were Zero deaths in 2017, the best and safest year on record!"

-- Via CNN's Betsey Klein ([@betsy_klein](https://twitter.com/betsy_klein)), **RAJ SHAH** says the president "announced his initiative to modernize Air Traffic Control and under his leadership the Department of Homeland Security released enhanced security measures to ensure safer commercial air travel." <http://bit.ly/2CaovT3> **FOR THE RECORD:** Congress has not passed the air-traffic legislation.

OUR FAULT -- Jake's early morning brain freeze led us to write the House is in and Senate is out this week. The reality is the House is out and the Senate is in.

WE HEAR... Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) could make an announcement about his political future as soon as today. ... **WE ALSO HEAR** that the No. 2s -- House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) -- are also going to Camp David with POTUS, Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell this weekend.

DANIEL STRAUSS: "Doug Jones hires African-American chief of staff": "Sen.-elect Doug Jones (D-Ala.) has hired former transportation official and congressional aide Dana Gresham as his new chief of staff. Jones will be the only Senate Democrat to have an African-American chief of staff once Gresham comes on board. Two Senate Republicans, Sens. Tim Scott of South Carolina and Jerry Moran of Kansas, have black chiefs of staff.

"Gresham previously served as assistant secretary for government affairs at the Department of Transportation, and before that was chief of staff to then-Rep. Artur Davis (D-Ala.). A graduate of Georgetown University, Gresham is an Alabama native: A tweet Tuesday by Rep. Terri Sewell (D-Ala.) referred to him as 'Birmingham's own stand out.'" <http://politi.co/2CsVLbA>

L.A. TIMES' BRIAN BENNETT: "Where's the California love? Trump is first president in decades to skip a visit in initial year": "Trump is about to become the first president since Dwight D. Eisenhower 64 years ago to skip a visit to California during his first calendar year in office. And he doesn't appear to have any plans to take Air Force One to the country's most populous and economically powerful state before he marks his first full year in office Jan. 20." <http://lat.ms/2IEKr2w>

HODA NAMED FULLTIME 'TODAY' CO-ANCHOR -- HODA KOTB will co-anchor the 7-9 a.m. hours of "TODAY" with Savannah Guthrie, permanently taking over after Matt Lauer was fired. She'll continue to co-host the 10 a.m. hour of the show with Kathie Lee Gifford as well. ***Guthrie making the announcement on air*** <http://bit.ly/2DPQ2cY>

MORE TRUMP TWEETS -- @realDonaldTrump at 7:09 a.m.: "The people of Iran are finally acting against the brutal and corrupt Iranian regime. All of the money that President Obama so foolishly gave them went into terrorism and into their 'pockets.' The people have little food, big inflation and no human rights. The U.S. is watching!" ... **at 7:48 a.m.:** "Crooked Hillary Clinton's top aid [sic], Huma Abedin, has been accused of disregarding basic security protocols. She put Classified Passwords into the hands of foreign agents. Remember sailors pictures on submarine? Jail! Deep State Justice Dept must finally act? Also on Comey & others" ... **at 8:44 a.m.:** "Thank you to Brandon Judd of the National Border Patrol Council for your kind words on how well we are doing at the Border. We will be bringing in more & more of your great folks and will build the desperately needed WALL! @foxandfriends" ...

... at 8:49 a.m.: "Companies are giving big bonuses to their workers because of the Tax Cut Bill. Really great!" ... at 9:08 a.m.: "Sanctions and 'other' pressures are beginning to have a big impact on North Korea. Soldiers are dangerously fleeing to South Korea. Rocket man now wants to talk to South Korea for first time. Perhaps that is good news, perhaps not - we will see!" ...

... at 9:39 a.m.: "The Failing New York Times has a new publisher, A.G. Sulzberger. Congratulations! Here is a last chance for the Times to fulfill the vision of its Founder, Adolph Ochs, 'to give the news impartially, without fear or FAVOR, regardless of party, sect, or interests involved.' Get..." ... at 9:53 a.m.: "...impartial journalists of a much higher standard, lose all of your phony and non-existent 'sources,' and treat the President of the United States FAIRLY, so that the next time I (and the people) win, you won't have to write an apology to your readers for a job poorly done! GL".

-- **TAKE A STEP BACK:** The president of the United States is calling for the top aide to a political rival to be jailed, despite no charges being filed. He's also threatening a former FBI director who has publicly raised concerns about the president. And he's accusing journalists of relying on fake sources. ***The Daily Caller story Trump is likely talking about: "Abedin Forwarded State Passwords To Yahoo Before It Was Hacked By Foreign Agents"*** <http://bit.ly/2DOuM7u>

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS will host the first press briefing of the year at 2 p.m. today.

***** **A message from Better Medicare Alliance: HEALTH CARE POLICY ALERT:**
We can all agree that high need, high cost patients deserve the best care. And with Medicare Advantage, seniors and people with disabilities are getting the high-value care they need through flexible benefits and specialized care. Learn more:
<http://bettermedicarealliance.org> *****

TRUMP INC. -- "Foreign governments are finding ways to do favors for Trump's business," by McClatchy's Anita Kumar: "In Indonesia, a local government plans to build a road to shorten the drive between the main airport on the island of Bali and the new high-end Trump resort and golf course. In Panama, the country's federal government intervened to ensure a sewer system around a 70-story Trump skyscraper shaped like a sail in Panama City would be completed.

"And in other countries, governments have donated public land, approved permits and eased environmental regulations for Trump-branded developments, creating a slew of potential conflicts as foreign leaders make investments that can be seen as gifts or attempts to gain access to the American president through his sprawling business empire.

"The White House dismisses these concerns, as does the Trump Organization's attorney. But when foreign governments that provide gifts to the Trump Organization,

even those that benefit other businesses, it puts President Donald Trump in possible violation of the U.S. Constitution's emoluments clause that states officials may not accept gifts from foreign governments and that no benefit should be derived by holding office." <http://bit.ly/2DQ0lly>

-- **"Trump-owned Doonbeg golf resort has yet to turn a profit,"** by the Irish Times' Gordon Deegan: "U.S. president Donald Trump's investment in the west Clare golf resort of Doonbeg has yet to make a profit despite a 30 per cent jump in revenues to ???6.5 million, according to accounts just filed. Figures for the Trump-owned TIGL Ireland Enterprises Ltd for 2016 show that it continues to make operating losses, although these almost halved in that year to to ???807,090." <http://bit.ly/2ECf68v>

SUSAN GLASSER in POLITICO MAG -- "Donald Trump's Year of Living Dangerously": "Over the course of the year, I have often heard top foreign officials express their alarm in hair-raising terms rarely used in international diplomacy -- let alone about the president of the United States. Seasoned diplomats who have seen Trump up close throw around words like 'catastrophic,' 'terrifying,' 'incompetent' and 'dangerous.' In Berlin this spring, I listened to a group of sober policy wonks debate whether Trump was merely a 'laughingstock' or something more dangerous. Virtually all of those from whom I've heard this kind of ranting are leaders from close allies and partners of the United States. That experience is no anomaly. 'If only I had a nickel for every time a foreign leader has asked me what the hell is going on in Washington this year ...' says Richard Haass, a Republican who served in senior roles for both Presidents Bush and is now president of the Council on Foreign Relations.

"So what the hell is going on?" I've come to believe that when it comes to Trump and the world, it's not better than you think. It's worse. The president is not playing the leadership role the rest of the world has come to expect from the United States, and the consequences are piling up. Still, it is also true that the world hasn't exactly melted down -- yet -- as a consequence, leading some to conclude that Trump is merely a sort of cartoonishly incompetent front man, a Twitter demagogue whose nuclear-tinged rhetoric and predilection for cozying up to dictators should be discounted in favor of rational analysis of the far more sober-minded, far less radical policies actually put in place by his team." <http://politi.co/2DSEcyJ>

A LOT OF PINOCCHIOS -- "President Trump has made 1,950 false or misleading claims over 347 days," by WaPo's Glenn Kessler, Meg Kelly and Nicole Lewis: "With just 18 days before President Trump completes his first year as president, he is now on track to exceed 2,000 false or misleading claims, according to our database that analyzes, categorizes and tracks every suspect statement uttered by the president. As of Monday, the total stood at 1,950 claims in 347 days, or an average of 5.6 claims a day. As regular readers know, the president has a tendency to repeat himself -- often. There are now more than 60 claims that he has repeated three or more times." <http://wapo.st/2DPaAIH>

WAR REPORT -- "One U.S. service member killed, four wounded in Afghanistan,"

by Military Times' Meghann Myers: "One U.S. service member was killed and four others were wounded during a combat engagement on Monday in Afghanistan, according to a Tuesday release from U.S. Forces-Afghanistan. The incident happened in Achin, Nangarhar province, the release said. Two of the wounded service members were treated at a nearby medical treatment facility and are in stable condition, officials said. The other two have been returned to duty." <http://bit.ly/2Ezy13l>

AFTERNOON READ -- "The Future of Trumpism Is on Campus," by The Atlantic's Elaine Godfrey: "In many ways, the debate over Trump taking place among College Republicans mirrors the national intra-party one: It pits young conservatives who view Trump as a distraction from long-held conservative goals of shrinking government and defending family values against those who see Trump's presidency and distinctive message as a much-needed adjustment of the party's priorities. During a speech to the College Republican National Committee in 1987, President Ronald Reagan called them the 'vanguard' of the GOP whose work will 'ensure the continued success of Republican goals.' But today, they're unable to agree on what those goals should be." <http://theatlantic.com/2EBztCH>

HMM... -- "Roger Stone discloses secret foreign lobbying," from Legistorm's Caught Our Eye blog: "Roger Stone, President Donald Trump's confidant, has indicated that he secretly signed a client in May of last year to lobby on security interests in Somalia as the U.S. military sent troops there. Stone filed a lobbying disclosure about the work on Dec. 29, although it indicates the effective date of registration was May 1. That makes it more than 6 months late after the 45-day window expired in which he was required to register. The late disclosure occurred even as federal agents are showing intense interest in the financial connections that Trump advisers have to foreign interests. The document does not disclose which agencies or people he lobbied, nor how much he is being paid. The client is Capstone Financial Group Inc., a Buffalo, N.Y.-area firm that specializes in international commodities." <http://bit.ly/2DRpqZ2>

VALLEY TALK -- Microsoft's **BRAD SMITH** and **CAROL ANN BROWNE'S** top 10 tech issues in 2018: Cybersecurity ... Immigration ... Technology for rural communities ... Diversity and tech ... privacy and surveillance ... AI and its role in society ... Sustainability ... Net neutrality ... Coding in schools ... Globalization of the IT sector <http://politi.co/2DRopzZ>

MEDIAWATCH -- TRACY GRANT has been named managing editor for staff development and standards at WaPo. She has been at The Post for 25 years. *Executive editor Marty Baron's note to staff* <http://wapo.st/2Ezqj9M>

TRANSITION -- OBAMA ALUMNI: Meryl Holt has started as a litigation associate in the NYC office of Debevoise & Plimpton. She worked on the Hillary for America campaign and was special assistant to Chairman Austan Goolsbee and director of strategic initiatives at the Council of Economic Advisers in the Obama White House.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- Andrew Egger, reporter for the Weekly Standard, on

Saturday married **Grace Link**, a kindergarten teacher at Immanuel Lutheran School in Alexandria, Va. "The wedding was at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Alexandria with a reception held at the American Legion in Vienna. They met in their first English class together at Hillsdale College in Michigan." **Pics by Eliana Anthony** <http://bit.ly/2Cqrvhp> ... <http://bit.ly/2zXmQ1h> ... <http://bit.ly/2lzCvPa>

--**PERRY ALUMNI** -- **Rob Anderson**, associate director for the Stanford Fund and alum of Terry Branstad, Tim Pawlenty, Rick Perry, and FP1 Strategies, on Sunday married **Cecily Sweet**, consultant and associate legal counsel at Talent Plus and alum of Raul Grijalva and DoD. The couple met on the 14th Street in DC at Black Jack and the wedding was in Lincoln, Nebraska. "Their first date was a magic show at the Mayflower after a world class dinner at Zaytinya. ... The couple is moving to Denver in February." **Pics** <http://politi.co/2Cmhnai> ... <http://politi.co/2CpH2ic> ... <http://politi.co/2C7FyoV>

SPOTTED: Annie Kelly Kuhle, Kevin Kuhle, Travis Holler, Blake Waggoner, Rye Finegan, Jordan Finegan, Jana Spacek, Steve Bruns, Alex Langhorne, Rosemary Adams, Elizabeth Anderson.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- **Kate Bolduan**, anchor and host of CNN's "At This Hour" at 11 a.m. and CNN International's "State of America," and **Michael David Gershenson**, a managing director at the Carlyle Group, post on Instagram: "She's here! Delphine Esther. The best gift of all." **Instapic** <http://bit.ly/2CzobOR>

-- **Megan Corey**, senior director of marketing and communications at the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, and **Jason Corey**, account executive at Cogent Communications, recently welcomed Lyla Patricia Corey. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2q0wgJF>

ENGAGED -- ROMNEY ALUMNI -- **John Patrick "JP" Purcell**, associate director of corporate and foundation relations at the Seminar Network and a NAM and Joe Lieberman alum, proposed to **Logan Berman**, associate director of corporate partnerships at Children's National Medical Center and an AFP and Romney alum. "On Friday, December 22, they were in New York City at Rockefeller Center when JP dropped to one knee ... and Logan said yes! The couple met at a Super Bowl party in 2014 in Clarendon." **Instapic** <http://bit.ly/2EmsCwZ>

***** **A message from Better Medicare Alliance: CONGRESS HAS UNFINISHED BUSINESS TO PROTECT MEDICARE ADVANTAGE SENIORS:** 19 million seniors and people with disabilities choose Medicare Advantage for one reason: it gives them the flexible, affordable, and robust health care they need. And with health needs in this country becoming more complex, it's clear that innovative, holistic solutions are required.

When Congress returns Better Medicare Alliance urges lawmakers to act quickly to improve care for Medicare beneficiaries by approving the CHRONIC Care Act providing enhanced flexibility in supplemental benefit designs for high-cost, high-need beneficiaries and permanently reauthorizing Special Needs Plans (SNPs). Moreover,

Congress should vote to delay the Health Insurance Tax (HIT) to protect Medicare Advantage beneficiaries from unaffordable premium hikes.

Enrollment in Medicare Advantage and consumer satisfaction is growing. There is more evidence that Medicare Advantage is improving outcomes and leading efforts to implement innovations in delivery of care. Learn more: <http://bettermedicarealliance.org>

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Daily Communications Report 9 11 17.docx

EPA Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17

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NTK Network: Exclusive AP Story Relied on EPA Intern and Disgruntled Employee

An Associated Press report regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) effort to secure 54 toxic Superfund sites that are in the path of Hurricane Irma relied on a former EPA intern and an employee who lied about why she left the agency as its sources. The story, which was titled, "AP Exclusive: Toxic sites in likely path of Irma," was written by Michael Bisecker and Jason Dearen, who painted Stephen Sweeney as "a former employee in EPA's office of policy." The Washington Examiner reported, however: "According to federal employment data, Sweeney worked at the EPA for barely more than a year as an "Administration and Office Support Student Trainee." People in less bureaucratic circles call that a paid internship."

E&E News: House to debate EPA regional office closures

The House will weigh blocking any potential plans to cut or close U.S. EPA's regional offices this week as it completes work on a broad, fiscal 2018 spending package. The regional office proposal is one of a handful of remaining amendments to the Interior-EPA section of the appropriations bill, which would also fund the departments of Commerce, State, Justice, Transportation and Agriculture (E&E Daily, Sept. 5). The House is expected to pass the legislation this week, after delaying a vote late last week to focus on a Hurricane Harvey aid package (Greenwire, Sept. 8).

BNA: EPA Chief Pledges to Secure Toxic Sites in Irma's Storm Path

The Trump administration is applying lessons from Hurricane Harvey's drenching of southeast Texas as it secures toxic waste sites in the path of Hurricane Irma, U.S. environmental chief Scott Pruitt said. The Environmental Protection Agency's main goal is to make sure there are "enough people on the ground" to quickly assess the integrity of at-risk chemical sites and

respond to needs as the monster storm moves through, Pruitt said. Technical staff already are working to secure about 80 Superfund sites in Irma's path from Miami to North Carolina, including a former pesticide plant, military base, and machine shop. "Operationally, we've tried to make sure we apply the same type of approach we used in Texas," Pruitt, the EPA's administrator, said in a Sept. 7 interview. "Because of the area and the amount of population that's affected in Florida, we're trying to be even more aggressive."

Reuters: US Coast Guard, EPA Cleaning up a Dozen Texas Chemical Spills After Harvey

The U.S. Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency are working with Texas state regulators to clean up oil and chemicals spilled from a dozen industrial facilities after flooding from Hurricane Harvey, authorities said. The spills came from oil refineries, fuel terminals and other businesses, but EPA spokeswoman Terri White said it was not possible to provide an estimate for the amounts spilled. "Initial reports were based on observation," White said. "Some spills were already being cleaned up by the time EPA or other officials arrived to assess them and others had already migrated offsite."

AG Week: EPA: Thumbs-up to 'energy beet' idea

The Environmental Protection Agency predicted it might take six months to do an initial evaluation of "energy beets" for their environmental footprint as a feedstock for biofuels. Six years — not months — later the agency has a thumbs up on energy beets as a feedstock — rating it for greenhouse gases and other environmental issues. Proponents say it's the first of three hurdles in making it accepted as a viable biofuel. Dave Ripplinger, a North Dakota State University bioenergy specialist, and Maynard Helgaas, an agricultural businessman who has been pushing the idea for eight years, say they're grateful for a positive report, despite the time lag, and look forward to the next phases that could finally create an industry that qualifies for the highest subsidies.

Delaware News Journal: EPA extends Delaware pollution waiver in attempt to lower gas prices

Responding to a 40-cent spike in gas prices, regulators on Friday gave Delaware fuel stations further permission to sell stockpiles of winter-blend gasoline. The move is "to ensure stability of the state's fuel supply in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey's impact on gas production in Texas, where five refineries remain shuttered," said Michael Globetti, spokesman for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, in a statement. Delaware saw some of the largest upward swings in gas prices nationally after Harvey pummeled the Texas Gulf Coast in August, and limited gasoline production at more than a dozen refineries.

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National Afternoon News Highlights 9.11.17

Reuters: Mexico rescinds Texas aid offer after huge quake

Mexico has withdrawn its offer to aid victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas due to demands on its emergency services from a massive earthquake that struck late last week, the foreign ministry said in a statement on Monday. Mexico's government offered to send food, beds, generators, mobile kitchens as well as doctors after torrential rains from Harvey flooded vast parts of Houston. But the earthquake that struck southern Mexico on Thursday killed at least 96 people and left some 2.5 million people in need of aid. Hurricane Katia also hit the Gulf state of Veracruz this weekend and heavy rains have stretched emergency services.

Politico: Trump takes travel-ban exemption fight back to SCOTUS

The Trump administration is returning to the Supreme Court in an effort to overturn lower court rulings crimping the application of President Donald Trump's travel ban executive order. Justice Department lawyers asked the high court Monday to allow authorities to keep up a block on many refugees covered by Trump's ban. However, the administration threw in the towel for now on efforts to insist that grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins of U.S. citizens be covered by the ban despite the Supreme Court ordering an exemption for close family members.

The Wall Street Journal: Dow Climbs Back Above 22000 as Fears Ease

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed back above 22000 for the first time in nearly a month, as investors' fears eased about North Korea and Hurricane Irma. Stocks rose broadly and haven assets retreated, a reversal from last week when major U.S. stock indexes, the dollar and Treasury yields fell as investors worried about worst-case scenarios from summer storms and threats from North Korea. The Dow industrials rose 266 points, or 1.2%, to 22063 in recent trading. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite jumped 1.1%.

TRUMP TWEETS

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/exclusive-ap-story-relied-on-epa-intern-and-disgruntled-employee/>

Exclusive AP Story Relied on EPA Intern and Disgruntled Employee

By: No author listed, 9/11/17, 2:03 p.m.

An Associated Press report regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) effort to secure 54 toxic Superfund sites that are in the path of Hurricane Irma relied on a former EPA intern and an employee who lied about why she left the agency as its sources.

The story, which was titled, “AP Exclusive: Toxic sites in likely path of Irma,” was written by Michael Bisecker and Jason Dearen, who painted Stephen Sweeney as “a former employee in EPA’s office of policy.”

The Washington Examiner reported, however: “According to federal employment data, Sweeney worked at the EPA for barely more than a year as an “Administration and Office Support Student Trainee.” People in less bureaucratic circles call that a paid internship.”

The second source that the AP reporters used, Elizabeth Southerland, was formerly the director of science and technology in EPA’s Office of Water. Southerland told the AP that EPA should do more “to quickly respond with careful monitoring after the storm.”

The Washington Examiner also reported on why the AP citing Southerland was problematic:

“Like the intern, there’s reason to doubt Southerland. After more than 30 years at the EPA, she reportedly quit in protest of budget cuts and Pruitt’s leadership. But the decision had more to do with retirement than political protest. A Washington Free Beacon report found that Southerland was eligible for a pension.”

“None of any of this disqualifies Southerland or Sweeney per se. They might well know some science things. But it’s unsettling for a multinational news agency that’s reprinted as journalism’s gold standard. The AP should be able to find better sources than a biased analyst

and an intern.”

It appears that the AP’s editorial standards are a little lax when it comes to publishing a piece that attacks the Trump administration.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060060215>

House to debate EPA regional office closures

By George Cahlink, 9/11/17

The House will weigh blocking any potential plans to cut or close U.S. EPA's regional offices this week as it completes work on a broad, fiscal 2018 spending package.

The regional office proposal is one of a handful of remaining amendments to the Interior-EPA section of the appropriations bill, which would also fund the departments of Commerce, State, Justice, Transportation and Agriculture (E&E Daily, Sept. 5).

The House is expected to pass the legislation this week, after delaying a vote late last week to focus on a Hurricane Harvey aid package (Greenwire, Sept. 8).

The EPA office amendment, offered by Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.), comes in response to speculation the agency could shutter some of its 10 regional branches.

Lawmakers' worries spiked earlier this year when an internal EPA budget hinted at closing some of the offices, but Administrator Scott Pruitt said no discussions are actually happening. This week will be the House's first chance to vote on the issue.

Polis acknowledged Pruitt's assurances last week but said his plan would make it much harder. The congressman noted EPA regional offices are at the forefront of disaster responses, like Harvey in Texas, and also address the "very real threat of climate change."

Other amendments

The House this week will also consider a proposal from Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.) to prohibit spending for enforcing an Obama administration EPA rule related to methane emissions. The Trump administration already has sought to block the rule, but that plan has run into resistance from the courts.

Mullin said on the floor last week that the methane rule is a "job-killing regulation" that will cost the economy \$530 million annually by limiting oil and gas operations.

Most Democrats are certain to oppose the amendment, seeing the rule as part of a broader push to cap emissions that cause climate change.

Mullin and Rep. Scott Perry (R-Pa.) will also push an amendment that would prohibit funds from being used to measure the social cost of carbon. Mullin noted the House already has backed similar provisions 11 times in recent years.

Rep. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.) will get a vote on a proposal that would cut EPA funding by \$1.9 billion to \$5.6 billion, which he said would match the administration's request for the agency for fiscal 2018.

But the amendment may face bipartisan opposition as lawmakers have already resisted other proposals to make steep cuts to EPA funding in the bill.

Once the package is completed, the House will have finished all 12 fiscal 2018 spending bills, although the Senate has yet to pass any.

As a result, the recently approved Harvey aid measure extended current fiscal 2017 spending about three months beyond the start of the new fiscal year to Dec. 8 to buy members time to hammer out a final spending accord.

BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=120234427&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

EPA Chief Pledges to Secure Toxic Sites in Irma's Storm Path

By Jennifer A. Dlouhy, 9/11/17

The Trump administration is applying lessons from Hurricane Harvey's drenching of southeast Texas as it secures toxic waste sites in the path of Hurricane Irma, U.S. environmental chief Scott Pruitt said.

The Environmental Protection Agency's main goal is to make sure there are “enough people on the ground” to quickly assess the integrity of at-risk chemical sites and respond to needs as the monster storm moves through, Pruitt said. Technical staff already are working to secure about 80 Superfund sites in Irma's path from Miami to North Carolina, including a former pesticide plant, military base, and machine shop.

“Operationally, we've tried to make sure we apply the same type of approach we used in Texas,” Pruitt, the EPA's administrator, said in a Sept. 7 interview. “Because of the area and the amount of population that's affected in Florida, we're trying to be even more aggressive.”

The EPA faced some criticism for its response to Hurricane Harvey in Texas, as it was not able to immediately inspect some toxic Superfund sites that were flooded or inaccessible. After chemicals at one plant exploded, spewing fumes into the air, the agency said an initial analysis showed “no high levels of toxic chemicals.” Earlier on Sept. 7, local police officers filed a lawsuit against the plant owners, Arkema SA, saying they were sickened by the fumes from the

plant.

Nearly 200 EPA personnel were deployed in Texas. The agency has about 77 people working on Irma related efforts and another seven are on the way.

Back-to-back hurricanes hitting the U.S. threaten to strain the federal government's resources, prompting the Senate to pass a \$15.25 billion relief bill Sept. 7, and renewing a debate about the size and scope of federal agencies.

The Trump administration has proposed cutting nearly a third of the EPA's budget for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1 and culling roughly 3,200 employees from the agency's 15,000-member workforce, a process that has already begun as hundreds of workers accept buyouts.

Pruitt stressed that the EPA has not been hit by budget reductions yet, as Congress weighs how much to spend on the agency. Both Republican and Democratic lawmakers have signaled that they will refuse to make the steep budget cuts President Donald Trump is seeking for EPA.

“Congress is working through the budget as we speak, so there's been no impact in that regard,” Pruitt said. “It's more of just simply allocating personnel and prioritizing personnel—making sure that at the end of the day it's the local officials and the state officials in partnership with the EPA.”

Reuters

<https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2017-09-11/us-coast-guard-epa-cleaning-up-a-dozen-texas-chemical-spills-after-harvey>

US Coast Guard, EPA Cleaning up a Dozen Texas Chemical Spills After Harvey

By Emily Flitter, 9/11/17

The U.S. Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency are working with Texas state regulators to clean up oil and chemicals spilled from a dozen industrial facilities after flooding from Hurricane Harvey, authorities said.

The spills came from oil refineries, fuel terminals and other businesses, but EPA spokeswoman Terri White said it was not possible to provide an estimate for the amounts spilled.

"Initial reports were based on observation," White said. "Some spills were already being cleaned up by the time EPA or other officials arrived to assess them and others had already migrated offsite."

Refineries owned by Valero Energy Corp in Houston, Motiva Inc in Port Arthur, and Exxon Mobile Corp in Baytown, were among the facilities that had reported spills, according to White. Representatives for those companies did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Officials also reported spills at Kinder Morgan Inc's Pasadena fuel storage terminal and at an oil terminal in Texas City owned by NuStar Energy LP.

Kinder Morgan spokeswoman Lexey Long said on Monday the company reported a spill of 500 barrels of gasoline on Aug. 27. Workers covered the spill with a foam blanket and set up a barrier to keep the public away.

"The spill has been fully remediated," she said.

NuStar representatives had no immediate comment.

Two wastewater treatment plants - Integrity Golden Triangle Marine Services of Port Arthur and San Jacinto River and Rail in Beaumont - also appeared on the list of spill response locations that EPA provided to Reuters.

San Jacinto River and Rail said it spilled a "foamy emulsion" when floodwaters overtopped the berms around its facility.

"Some is on our property and some is on adjacent property which has already been cleaned up," said spokesman Dennis Winkler. "We do not expect a long-term environmental impact. We do not expect there will be any air impact or health impacts."

Representatives from Integrity Golden Triangle did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The liquid spills come in addition to more than a million pounds of toxic emissions above legal limits that spewed from industrial facilities following Harvey, according to reports from companies filed with the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality.

The EPA and other authorities had warned people affected by the flood that waters could contain bacteria and toxic chemicals, but have said little yet about the specific origins or quantities of substances.

Residents in Baytown, where houses sit along the Houston Ship Channel next to several major refineries and chemical plants, said they were concerned about the impact of the spills and releases on health.

"I'm against the sword and the wall, what can I do?" said Carlos Caban, one of the residents, whose son had taken pictures of contaminated-looking floodwaters in nearby refinery site.

Several residents reported seeing a metallic sheen on water flowing near the plants during the heaviest flooding, posting videos to YouTube.

AG Week

<http://www.agweek.com/news/north-dakota/4324802-epa-thumbs-energy-beet-idea>

EPA: Thumbs-up to 'energy beet' idea

By Mikkell Pates, 9/11/17

The Environmental Protection Agency predicted it might take six months to do an initial evaluation of "energy beets" for their environmental footprint as a feedstock for biofuels.

Six years — not months — later the agency has a thumbs up on energy beets as a feedstock — rating it for greenhouse gases and other environmental issues. Proponents say it's the first of three hurdles in making it accepted as a viable biofuel.

Dave Ripplinger, a North Dakota State University bioenergy specialist, and Maynard Helgaas, an agricultural businessman who has been pushing the idea for eight years, say they're grateful for a positive report, despite the time lag, and look forward to the next phases that could finally create an industry that qualifies for the highest subsidies.

"This is a milestone in the commercialization of energy beets," Ripplinger says of the EPA's recent report.

The EPA decided to change the Renewable Fuels Standard in 2015, which reduced the momentum for advanced biofuel and cellulosic ethanol fuel. Every gallon of biofuel is given a 38-digit "RIN number" which is used to track the use of the fuels. Petroleum fuel marketers must blend biofuel ethanol into their fuel or buy the RINs.

High RIN goals

Standard corn ethanol recently has an 80- to 85-cent per gallon RIN value, while advanced biofuels are around \$1.10 per gallon, says Kyle Althoff, president of Equinox LLC, a biofuels and agribusiness consultant in Fargo. Cellulosic ethanol is more than \$2 per gallon.

Helgaas, 82, of West Fargo, is president of the Green Vision Group which has been studying the energy beet concept for eight years. The CVG looked at ten communities where a plant might be located and closely studied.

Energy beets produce C5 and C6 ethanol feedstock, which in turn produce aviation fuel and other products, including pharmaceuticals.

Blaine Schatz, the director of the NDSU Carrington Research and Extension Center, has worked with demonstration and testing plots in nine communities around the state, accumulating eight years of plot data. Besides the feedstock, the beets also have benefits for helping to rehabilitate soils that have become unproductive due to salts that have risen during high-water years.

Ripplinger was philosophical about the EPA delays. The agency received more applications than they expected and it took more computer modeling to complete the process, he says. He thinks it's just a coincidence that the energy beet proponents got an unofficial word that the initial process was completed in the first few weeks in the Trump administration.

Although North Dakota was an early proponent, Ripplinger says other energy beet projects across the country may be built first, noting California and Maryland projects have been proposed.

Helgaas says that in Europe 15 percent of the biofuels are from sugar beets, generally with significantly different breeding than for human consumption sugar. Syngenta and Betaseed are two breeding companies who already have developed seed for industrial beet breeding stock.

Delaware News Journal

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/2017/09/11/epa-extends-delaware-pollution-waiver-attempt-lower-gas-prices/652891001/>

EPA extends Delaware pollution waiver in attempt to lower gas prices

By Karl Baker, 9/11/17

Responding to a 40-cent spike in gas prices, regulators on Friday gave Delaware fuel stations further permission to sell stockpiles of winter-blend gasoline.

The move is "to ensure stability of the state's fuel supply in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey's impact on gas production in Texas, where five refineries remain shuttered," said Michael Globetti, spokesman for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, in a statement.

Delaware saw some of the largest upward swings in gas prices nationally after Harvey pummeled the Texas Gulf Coast in August, and limited gasoline production at more than a dozen refineries.

Outages in Texas affect gas stations across the country because more than half of U.S. refinery capacity is located near the Gulf Coast, according to the U.S. Energy Information Agency.

While gasoline futures, which are predictors of upcoming pump prices, have fallen since a spike after Harvey, retail prices in Delaware and nationally have not.

On Monday, a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline sold for \$2.68 in Delaware, up about 23 percent from Aug. 26, just days before Harvey made landfall, according to both AAA and Gasbuddy.com.

DNREC in late August first received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a statewide waiver to allow "regulated parties" to sell winter-blend gasoline through Sept. 15.

"Regulated parties would be the supply chain, from the refineries down to the distributor down to the corner WaWa or Royal Farms service station," Globetti said.

Federal Clean Air Act rules prohibit sale of the blend between May and September in order to minimize ozone pollution.

The gasoline evaporates at lower temperatures than summer varieties, and can be harmful to people with sensitive lungs during sunny days.

Friday's announcement extends the EPA waiver through Sept. 26.

Officials hope pump prices will drop in Delaware as more gallons of gasoline become available for sale.

A spokesman for PBF Energy, owners of the First State's sole refinery in Delaware City, did not immediately respond to a emailed question about the amount of winter blend gasoline the facility has stored.

Hurricane Irma's landfall in Florida over the weekend has not measurably impacted prices outside of state, which is not home to any major oil refinery. In anticipation of shortages in the Sunshine State, Homeland Security officials temporarily allowed foreign-flagged tankers to import gasoline into the area.

On Monday, traders bidding on the gasoline to be sold in October pushed its price down to pre-Harvey levels, indicating that Delaware prices at the pump will eventually follow suit.

Reuters

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/09/11/reuters-america-update-1-mexico-rescinds-texas-aid-offer-after-huge-quake.html> **Mexico rescinds Texas aid offer after huge quake**

By Reuters Staff, 9/11/17

Mexico has withdrawn its offer to aid victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas due to demands on its emergency services from a massive earthquake that struck late last week, the foreign ministry said in a statement on Monday.

Mexico's government offered to send food, beds, generators, mobile kitchens as well as doctors after torrential rains from Harvey flooded vast parts of Houston.

But the earthquake that struck southern Mexico on Thursday killed at least 96 people and left some 2.5 million people in need of aid. Hurricane Katia also hit the Gulf state of Veracruz this weekend and heavy rains have stretched emergency services.

"Given these circumstance, the Mexican government will channel all available logistical support to serve the families and communities affected in the national territory," the foreign ministry statement said.

U.S.-Mexican relations have been strained by U.S. President Donald Trump's threats to curtail trade with Latin America's No. 2 economy as well as his demand that Mexico pay for a border wall to keep out immigrants and drug traffickers.

The ministry noted that the U.S. embassy had taken nine days to respond to Mexico's formal offer of aid on Aug. 28, and said that "only certain logistical aid" was accepted.

The U.S. embassy in Mexico did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

While government aid never arrived, Mexico's volunteer Red Cross rushed food and supplies to storm refugees.

Mexican media highlighted that Trump had not spoken about the quake, which drew pledges of support from the pope and other world leaders, nor publicly acknowledged Mexico's aid offer.

The foreign ministry thanked Texas Governor Greg Abbott for sending messages of solidarity following the earthquake.

Separately, the ministry said Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray will travel to the United States this week to meet with local leaders and beneficiaries of a U.S. program protecting from deportation immigrants brought illegally into the United States as children.

Last week, Trump said he would end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program but delayed implementation until March to give Congress a chance to draft an alternative.

More than three-fourths of the 800,000 immigrants enrolled in the DACA program are from Mexico.

Videgaray will travel to Sacramento and Los Angeles on Sept. 11-12 and then to Washington on Sept. 13, the ministry said, adding that he will meet with California Governor Jerry Brown and other officials.

Politico

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/11/trump-takes-travel-ban-exemptions-fight-back-to-scotus-242557>

Trump takes travel-ban exemption fight back to SCOTUS

By Josh Gerstein, 9/11/17

The Trump administration is returning to the Supreme Court in an effort to overturn lower court rulings crimping the application of President Donald Trump's travel ban executive order.

Justice Department lawyers asked the high court Monday to allow authorities to keep up a block on many refugees covered by Trump's ban.

However, the administration threw in the towel for now on efforts to insist that grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins of U.S. citizens be covered by the ban despite the Supreme Court ordering an exemption for close family members.

A federal judge in Hawaii ruled against the federal government on both issues in July. Last week, a 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals panel declined to disturb that ruling.

The dispute taken to the justices Monday addresses how much of the travel ban can be enforced until the Supreme Court rules on the broader issues. The justices are scheduled to hear arguments Oct. 10 on a pair of cases related to the ban.

At issue are about 24,000 refugees who have been assigned to U.S. refugee resettlement agencies but not yet given final approval to depart for the U.S.

U.S. District Court Judge Derrick Watson agreed with the State of Hawaii and refugee advocates that the assignment to an American agency was a sufficient connection to a U.S. entity to qualify for the temporary travel-ban reprieve the Supreme Court ordered in June when it agreed to decide the broader legality of the travel ban.

Justice Department lawyers argued against that interpretation, noting that it would fill the

pipeline for refugee applicants and essentially nullify the partial stay the high court granted in June in an apparent compromise.

"The Ninth Circuit's decision renders the June 26 stay functionally inoperative," Acting Solicitor General Jeff Wall argued in the filing Monday. "It makes no sense to exempt from....the Order the roughly 24,000 refugees for whom assurances exist, based on the happenstance that they had reached a later stage of the administrative process in which the government routinely obtains assurances."

Justice Anthony Kennedy issued a temporary stay Monday afternoon that essentially freezes the status quo. Without such an action, Watson's order would have kicked in Tuesday, with the administration required to dramatically increase its admission of refugees.

Kennedy ordered Hawaii's attorneys to respond by noon Tuesday and said the temporary stay will remain in place pending further order from him or the full court.

The revised travel ban Trump issued in March suspends issuance of U.S. visas to residents of six majority-Muslim countries for 90 days and halts admission of refugees from across the globe for 120 days.

Those clocks, which began running in late June, may have contributed to the administration's decision to give up on enforcing the travel ban against the broader set of relatives given a reprieve by the lower courts. Due to court rulings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins have been immune from the ban for the past couple of months, so those seeking visas may have been aware of the legal fight and have already gotten them.

And with the six-country visa ban set to run out Sept. 24, few visa applicants would be affected even if the courts narrowed the family exemption.

In the Monday filing, Wall noted that the Supreme Court previously declined a request from the federal government to block the family-related aspect of Watson's order. "In addition, the lower courts' line-drawing error in that regard is less stark than their nullification of both the Order's

refugee provisions and this Court's stays permitting implementation of those provisions," he wrote as he explained why the family issue was being dropped.

Thousands of refugees could be impacted if the lower court rulings kick in, although the timing there is also uncertain. Refugee admissions are capped by fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30. Trump could try to block or reduce the admission of refugees after that date by setting that allocation to zero or a low figure.

Obama had set the cap for this year at 110,000, although for budget and capacity reasons a much lower number of refugees were actually expected to be admitted. Trump attempted to lower the cap to 50,000 for this year, but court rulings have effectively blocked that move.

The global refugee halt in Trump's revised executive order runs out in late October, about two weeks after the scheduled oral arguments at the high court. A ruling in the president's favor could empower him to reinstate or extend the travel ban orders or to implement something similar on a permanent basis.

It's also possible that the administration could try to scuttle the legal dispute by declaring the issues moot as a result of the expiration of the key provisions of Trump's orders

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/global-markets-rise-after-quiet-weekend-1505097744>

Dow Climbs Back Above 22000 as Fears Ease

By Marina Force and Corrie Driebush, 9/11/17

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed back above 22000 for the first time in nearly a month, as investors' fears eased about North Korea and Hurricane Irma.

Stocks rose broadly and haven assets retreated, a reversal from last week when major U.S. stock indexes, the dollar and Treasury yields fell as investors worried about worst-case scenarios from summer storms and threats from North Korea.

The Dow industrials rose 266 points, or 1.2%, to 22063 in recent trading. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite jumped 1.1%.

The last time the blue-chip index closed above 22000 was Aug. 16 and it hasn't posted a 1% gain since April.

Some analysts had expected North Korea to conduct a weapons test on Saturday, coinciding with the country's founding day, as it did last year to mark the celebration. The absence of news from Pyongyang supported stocks and the dollar, while weighing on haven assets, analysts say.

Government bond prices declined, pushing up yields. The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note rose to 2.129% in recent trading, according to Tradeweb, compared with Friday's close of 2.058%.

Many analysts don't expect this relative calm to last, however, and bond yields could decrease if North Korea tensions rise once again.

Meanwhile, concerns about Hurricane Irma's impact on the U.S. economy also decreased. A reduction in the storm's strength and a shift in its forecast course—there was no direct hit on Miami—meant insured damage estimates were likely to be less than originally anticipated by some analysts.

Reinsurance companies, which tumbled last week as they were expected to bear the financial brunt of Hurricane Irma's damage, jumped on Monday. Shares of Everest Re Group, which dropped more than 10% last week, rose 4.7% in recent trading. Chubb rose 3.8% and XL Group climbed 5.2%.

The WSJ Dollar Index, which measures the U.S. dollar against a basket of other currencies, rose 0.6%, after sinking to its lowest level in more than two years on Friday. The euro fell 0.6% against the greenback, paring some of last week's gains, to trade at \$1.1961.

The Stoxx Europe 600 rose 1%, boosted by gains in bank, insurance and technology shares—sectors that tend to gain when investors feel confident enough to take on more risk.

Gold, another traditional haven for money managers, fell 1%. The yen and the Swiss franc, which traditionally rise when markets are volatile, both fell against the U.S. dollar.

A weaker yen boosted Japanese blue-chip stocks. Japan's Nikkei Stock Average rose 1.4%, after setting fresh four-month lows on Friday and logging its worst week in seven months.

South Korea's Kospi added 0.7%, and Australia's S&P/200 rose 0.7%.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 59m
#NeverForget



*"When Americans are in need,
Americans pull together – and
we are one country. And when
we face hardship, we emerge
closer, stronger, and more
determined than ever."*

PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP

gr @realDonaldTrump | @POTUS | Donald J. Trump | @realDonaldTrump



2.6K 6.0K 21K



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 26m
May God Forever Bless the United States of America. #NeverForget911



NEVER FORGET

0:14

2.2K 5.3K 17K

To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 10/4/2017 6:41:02 PM
Subject: RE: Definers

Thank you!

-----Original Message-----

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2017 2:24 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers

I am sitting with the contracts team right now to finalize what needs to be done

Thx ng

Sent from my iPhone

> On Oct 4, 2017, at 2:20 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:
>
> What is the status on this? Ryan just asked for us to pull tv clips and we still don't have Definers who
can provide this service to us.
>
> Let's get this done!

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Wed 8/16/2017 11:53:03 AM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle: TRUMP DEFENDS WHITE SUPREMACISTS – Capitol's Confederate statues staying put – MOORE AND STRANGE MOVE ON TO AL-SEN RUNOFF – Gardner shamed back home for health care vote

08/16/2017 07:51 AM EDT

By Elana Schor (eschor@politico.com or [@eschor](https://twitter.com/eschor))

With an assist from Daniel Lippman

TRUMP DEFENDS WHITE SUPREMACISTS - President Donald Trump used a freewheeling Tuesday press conference in New York to undo the goodwill he had built up after a belated public condemnation of the white supremacists whose rally in Charlottesville turned fatal last weekend. Trump blamed "both sides" for the violent skirmishes, incorrectly stating that marchers wielding torches and performing Nazi salutes were "protesting very quietly" the night before the violent skirmishes in Virginia. And white supremacists like former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke were heartened by the remarks, Matthew Nussbaum [reports](#).

Read the full transcript of Trump's incredible press conference [right here](#).

REPUBLICANS OUTRAGED BY THEIR PRESIDENT - Senior Republicans didn't wait long to air their alarm at Trump's suggestion that white supremacists and counter-protesters were equally to blame for the death of one woman and injuries to more than a dozen others. Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) spoke out on Twitter, while Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) offered no new comment. Austin Wright had the run-down: <http://politi.co/2vZXL82>

@NBCNews -- "Pathetic, just pathetic ... What are we doing to our children to not condemn these people?" Ohio GOP Gov. John Kasich said of Trump on the network's "Today" show Wednesday. He's the subject of speculation about a 2020 primary challenge to the president.

@GMA - "In Charlottesville, the blame lays squarely on the KKK and white supremacists," Republican National Committee Chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel said on ABC Wednesday, taking direct issue with the president who selected her for her job.

But GOP chairmen are staying silent on the potential for hearings or other congressional action aimed at rooting out causes and possible remedies for domestic terrorism, Kyle and Rachael [report](#). House Democrats, however, are ramping up the pressure for more formal moves to highlight the seriousness of the problem.

CAPITOL'S CONFEDERATE STATUES STAYING PUT POST-CHARLOTTESVILLE - The white supremacist march that has exposed the nation's racial fault lines was inspired by Charlottesville's potential removal of a Robert E. Lee statue. But even as multiple other cities vow to preserve their plans for eliminating controversial relics of the Confederacy, there's no momentum for ridding the U.S. Capitol of the 10 Confederate statues that still have pride of

place under the dome. Your fill-in Huddle host had the full story: <http://politi.co/2wOaQPt>

MOORE AND STRANGE MOVE ON TO AL-SEN RUNOFF - As if Trump needed any more problems, his preferred candidate in the race for Attorney General Jeff Sessions' former Alabama Senate seat is in trouble. Sen. Luther Strange (R-Ala.) came in second in Tuesday's GOP primary, besting anti-establishment Rep. Mo Brooks (R-Ala.), but Strange will need a big boost over the next six weeks in order to defeat first-place finisher Roy Moore. Check out Alex Isenstadt and Seung Min's [report](#) on the path ahead for Trump and McConnell's top pick.

The final standings from Alabama - Moore, a former state Supreme Court justice, took 39.5 percent of the vote, while Strange claimed 32 percent and Brooks 20 percent. The Democratic nod went to former federal prosecutor Doug Jones, who bested seven other candidates with 64 percent of the vote.

WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY. (Yes, it's barely halfway through the week!) You're reading POLITICO's Huddle, the in-depth guide to all things Capitol Hill, on Aug. 16 and we thank you for being here. I'm passing the baton to Kyle Cheney starting tomorrow in your recess-month guest host roundup.

MONDAY'S MOST CLICKED: Eliana Johnson's in-depth [look at](#) Trump playing both sides after the Charlottesville violence took the top spot.

GARDNER SHAMED BACK HOME FOR HEALTH CARE VOTE - Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) has to lead his party's candidates to victory next year as chief of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, but that didn't spare him from a tough reception in his home state Tuesday. Gardner was met with cries of "shame" and called a liar for supporting his party's efforts to repeal Obamacare, although voters praised him for excoriating the white supremacists who rallied in Charlottesville. Rachana Pradhan had [the story](#) from Lakewood, Colo.

PROVO MAYOR TAKES UTAH HOUSE PRIMARY - The Alabama Senate contest wasn't the only big primary on Tuesday, as Provo mayor John Curtis claimed the GOP nod in the race to replace former House Oversight Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah). Curtis advances to a general election in November where he's considered overwhelmingly likely to defeat Democratic and third-party rivals. The Washington Post: <http://wapo.st/2vI27Oz>

REMEMBER, IT'S INFRASTRUCTURE WEEK - And the press conference that Trump turned into an unscripted argument for white supremacist marchers was designed to spotlight the White House's newest executive order on infrastructure. The order would roll back an Obama-era rule that mandated the construction of all federally funded construction work to keep up with flooding caused by the rising sea levels projected under climate change, but it put no new meat on the bones of Trump's promised \$1 trillion infrastructure plan, Lauren Gardner [reports](#).

CBO: PREMIUMS, DEFICIT UP IF OBAMACARE SUBSIDIES AXED - In the wake of the GOP's failure to repeal Obamacare, Trump has repeatedly flirted with eliminating the cost-sharing subsidies the federal government pays under the law to help low-income individuals get coverage - the next round of which are due next week. The Congressional Budget Office

projected Tuesday that that move would drive premiums up by 20 percent and increase the deficit by \$194 billion over 10 years, Paul Demko [reports](#).

TRUMP MOVES ON TO TAXES - The president sought to change the subject after his incendiary Tuesday remarks by jabbing Amazon for hurting "tax paying retailers" and causing job losses, repeating a previous criticism against the owner of the Washington Post. Amazon has collected standard state sales taxes from customers in every state that has one since April of this year, as Louis Nelson [notes](#).

TRANSITIONS -- Caitlin Girouard started on Tuesday as communications director for Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.). She previously was deputy chief of staff and communications director for Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-N.Y.).

TODAY IN CONGRESS - The House and Senate are out until September.

AROUND THE HILL - Recess, all we ever wanted.

TUESDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER - Allen Wiseley was first to guess two of the Cabinet departments whose leaders have only ever hailed from the same party as the president who appointed them: Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development.

TODAY'S TRIVIA - Zachary Israel, who made the same guess Monday before we sweetened the pot, has today's question: In May 1868, the U.S. Senate was one vote short of the two-thirds majority necessary to remove President Andrew Johnson from office after the House voted to impeach him in March of that year. Had one additional senator voted to convict Johnson, who would have become the 18th president of the United States?

The first person to correctly answer gets a shout out in tomorrow's Huddle. Send Kyle your guesses: kcheney@politico.com

GET HUDDLE [emailed to your phone](#) each morning.

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/huddle/2017/08/16/trump-defends-white-supremacists-capitols-confederate-statues-staying-put-moore-and-strange-move-on-to-al-sen-runoff-gardner-shamed-back-home-for-health-care-vote-221897>

To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings>

This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thur 9/28/2017 11:39:12 PM
Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

Thx

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 28, 2017, at 7:17 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

<image1.PNG>

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 28, 2017, at 6:33 PM, Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov> wrote:

Hi Jahan

Can you forward me the screen shot so I can send it to contracts thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 6:27 PM
To: Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

Great. Adding Nancy and Liz.

On Sep 28, 2017, at 4:11 PM, Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com> wrote:

We're fully registered...

<Screen Shot 2017-09-28 at 4.23.59 PM.png>

On Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 3:29 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov](mailto: Bowman.Liz@epa.gov)>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

HI –

Working with contracts on this – here is the remaining issue that the contracting officer brought to me yesterday --

Specifically, the vendor is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). In order for any vendor to receive a contract from the federal government, they must be registered in this system. The vendor seems to be reluctant to register.

George had been working with the vendor on this. I have a call into the vendor as they may need assistance in completing the forms.

Will update you as soon as I hear from the vendor.

Thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:02 PM

To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>

Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Definers -- Clips

Importance: High

Where are we on this and when can we get this going? Today is a day where we could really use their help capturing clips in real time. This is very important and our wait and the process to do this has been way too long. Thank you!

Jahan Wilcox

EPA

Strategic Communications Advisor

Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)

Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definerscorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Fri 11/3/2017 12:02:26 PM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle, sponsored by Brighthouse Financial: TRUMP LEAVES FOR ASIA TOUR – Brady talks taxes with Playbook today – FEMALE LAWMAKERS DETAIL HILL HARASSMENT – Lamar Smith to retire

11/03/2017 08:00 AM EDT

By Heather Caygle (hcaygle@politico.com or [@heatherscope](https://twitter.com/heatherscope))

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP leaves for Asia this morning, a 12-day excursion that includes stops in Japan, South Korea, China, Vietnam and the Philippines. Trump's trek, coming as the Russia probe intensifies and the GOP tries to muscle through a tax code rewrite, is the longest trip to Asia by a U.S. president in more than a quarter century, [Reuters' Steve Holland reports](#).

LET'S TALK A LITTLE TAX REFORM - House Republicans largely embraced their tax reform bill on Thursday, much to the relief of GOP leaders. The proposal is facing opposition from some key outside groups and a handful of Republicans from high-tax states who said they couldn't support the changes to the state and local tax deduction in the bill. But by and large, the reception from the House GOP conference was positive. "Guys from different caucuses, from different groups, were all speaking in favor of it," said Republican Study Committee Chairman Mark Walker (R-S.C.). Brian Faler with more: <http://politi.co/2Ads9uF>

Does the bill live up to GOP promises to help the middle class? "The House Republican tax bill is a clear windfall for corporate America and a roll of the dice for the middle-class families that President Trump promised would be the centerpiece of his economic agenda," the New York Times reports. Jim Tankersley with the analysis: <http://nyti.ms/2xUodh7>

What's next: Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady (R-Texas) will release his chairman's mark - the version of the bill that will be considered by the committee - today. Ways and Means will begin marking up the legislation, a process expected to last multiple days, on Monday. GOP leaders hope to get the bill passed on the House floor by Thanksgiving. But as our buddy Jake Sherman [pointed out on Twitter](#), House Republicans are only giving themselves nine legislative days to pass a complete rewrite of the U.S. tax code, something that hasn't been done in more than 30 years!

House bill text: <http://bit.ly/2iSWM4p> and a **section-by-section summary:** <http://bit.ly/2iWj5Gy>

Where there's a House, there's a Senate: With all the tax unity in the House, a storm could be brewing across the Capitol in the Senate, Seung Min reports. "Fiscal hawks are squawking about how tax legislation could balloon the deficit. Moderates like Sen. Susan Collins of Maine are worried tax cuts will disproportionately favor the rich. Even an Obamacare-related row could bubble up and trip up passage." Senate Republicans are expected to unveil their bill next week. Remember, Republicans can only lose two votes in the Senate and still pass a bill, assuming no

Democrats support the measure. SMK tells you who to watch in the upcoming fight:
<http://politi.co/2AeyeHw>

YOU'RE INVITED: House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady will sit down with Playbook co-authors Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman for his first public event. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. for the noon event at the Newseum (555 Pennsylvania, N.W.). **Tune in:** C-SPAN is carrying the program live. **RSVP:** <http://bit.ly/politicobradys>

FEMALE LAWMAKERS DETAIL HARASSMENT - Female lawmakers past and present are going on the record to detail harassment they've suffered by fellow colleagues, some of whom are still serving in Congress. "When I was a very new member of Congress in my early 30s, there was a more senior member who outright propositioned me, who was married, and despite trying to laugh it off and brush it aside it, would repeat. And I would avoid that member," Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-Calif.) told the AP about the lawmaker who remains in Congress. And she's not alone.

"The lawmakers declined to identify the perpetrators by name, but at least two of the men continue to serve in the House. None of the female lawmakers interviewed reported what happened, and some noted it was not clear where they would lodge such a complaint," Erica Werner and Juliet Linderman report. More: <http://bit.ly/2xTmFni>

WHAT A WEEK, HUH? Welcome to Friday, Nov. 3, and thanks for reading Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill. Daylight Savings Time ends this weekend so don't forget to set those clocks back one hour on Sunday y'all! Also Bama plays LSU at home on Saturday night, kickoff at 8 p.m. Roll Tide!

THURSDAY'S MOST CLICKED: Brian Faler and Rachael's [story](#) on the GOP's tax plan - "it's go time" - was the big winner yesterday.

COULD A GOVT SHUTDOWN BE COMING? Trump told GOP Senators Thursday he doesn't want to see a legislative fix for Dreamers in a year-end spending bill, upping the chances of a government shutdown. Democrats have eyed the must-pass funding bill as a key opportunity to reach agreement on DACA and Republicans will need Democratic votes. "Republicans can talk to themselves in the mirror all they want, but the fact is the vote is the currency of the realm and Republicans frequently find themselves holding an empty wallet," said Drew Hammill, spokesman for House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. More: <http://politi.co/2z8hl10>

SESSIONS FACES PRESSURE TO TESTIFY ON RUSSIA - Senate Democrats want to grill Attorney General Jeff Sessions again on what he knew about campaign contacts with Russia, [Elana reports](#). The focus on the AG comes after a plea deal with a former campaign adviser unsealed Monday said Sessions attended a meeting where that adviser, George Papadopoulos, raised the prospect of a meeting between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Sessions rejected the idea during the meeting but has previously told the Senate he didn't know of anyone in the campaign who had contact with Russia.

Separately, Carter Page testified before the House Intel Committee on Thursday that he told

Sessions "in passing in June 2016 that he planned to travel to Russia for a trip 'completely unrelated' to his volunteer role in the campaign," the New York Times reports. More: <http://nyti.ms/2xVnegI>

CLOVIS WITHDRAWS USDA NOMINATION - Former Trump campaign aide Sam Clovis has withdrawn his nomination to be the Department of Agriculture's chief scientist. Clovis had been under criticism for months for his lack of science credentials. And in recent days he also came under intense scrutiny for his role supervising Papadopoulos about his communications with Russia during the campaign. Andrew Restuccia, Josh Dawsey and Helen Bottemiller Evich with more: <http://politi.co/2AdCIOF>

JURY HEARS CLOSING ARGUMENTS IN MENENDEZ TRIAL - The jury began hearing closing arguments in Sen. Bob Menendez's bribery trial Thursday. The prosecutor and defense attorneys for Menendez's co-defendant, Dr. Salomon Melgen, both gave their closing statements. "They're lying to you," Melgen attorney Kirk Ogrosky told the jury about prosecutors. "They're making up a story and trying to get the evidence to fit their story." Menendez's attorneys offer their closing remarks Monday, which will be followed by a rebuttal from prosecutors. Matt Friedman with the latest from Newark: <http://politi.co/2zagRYI>

CHC FIGHT GETTING HEATED - GOP Rep. Carlos Curbelo may have derailed his chances of joining the Congressional Hispanic Caucus after a tense meeting with CHC Chairwoman Michelle Lujan Grisham. Curbelo suggested "he's more Hispanic than she is" and invaded her personal space, two CHC members who attended a caucus meeting where Lujan Grisham shared details of her encounter with Curbelo told BuzzFeed.

A Curbelo spokesperson disputed the account, saying he did not invade Lujan Grisham's personal space and "remained seated during the meeting, adding that he only raised his voice after she did." The CHC agreed Thursday to allow Curbelo and retiring GOP Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen to apply to join the group but will still vote on their prospective membership. Lissandra Villa: <http://bzfd.it/2AdM1y5>

**** A message from Brighthouse Financial:** The way we save, invest, and plan needs to evolve. Our world is changing every day. A company pension is the exception, not the rule, and reaching your 90th birthday isn't unusual. In these uncertain times, preparing for your retirement has never been so important. <https://www.brighthousefinancial.com/> ******

MORE DNC DRAMA - The Democratic National Committee fired its top fundraiser Thursday, just five months into the job, after months of lagging behind Republicans in ginning up campaign dollars. "The DNC raised \$51 million from January through September as it rebuilds under new chairman Tom Perez ...But the Republican National Committee brought in \$104 million over the same time period," [Gabriel Debenedetti reports](#). Meanwhile, many Democrats are outraged after former party chairwoman Donna Brazile [published a book excerpt on POLITICO](#) detailing the Hillary Clinton campaign's takeover of the DNC long before she had the nomination locked up, [the Washington Post reports](#).

Video du jour: CNN's Jake Tapper to Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) on Thursday: "Do you

agree with the notion that [the DNC] was rigged?" Warren: "Yes." Watch: <http://cnn.it/2xVP108>

LAMAR SMITH ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT - Rep. Lamar Smith, the controversial chairman of the House Science Committee, announced Thursday plans to retire when his term ends in 2018. "The 16-term Texas Republican is one of the longest-serving members of the state's congressional delegation, and has often tussled with academics, scientific organizations and government regulators since become Science chairman in 2013," Darius Dixon reports. Smith will be term-limited out of his chairmanship after this Congress. More: <http://politi.co/2AdJYtN>

ARRIVAL LOUNGE - Amy Surber recently started as legislative director for Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.). A native Hoosier, Surber most recently worked as a legislative assistant for Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Calif.).

TODAY IN CONGRESS - **The House** meets at 9 a.m. with an expected party-line vote on reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) at 10:30 a.m. **The Senate** doesn't like to work on Fridays and will be back at it again Monday.

AROUND THE HILL - House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Ways and Means ranking member Richard Neal (D-Mass.) hold a press conference on the GOP tax plan at 11 a.m. in the Rayburn Room (H-207).

Reps. Linda Sánchez, Mike Thompson, and Judy Chu, California Democrats on the Ways and Means Committee, hold a press call on the GOP tax bill at 12 p.m. RSVP: alex.nguyen@mail.house.gov.

THURSDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER - Scott Schweitzer was first to guess that on Nov. 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed a bill creating a holiday honoring Martin Luther King Jr. The legislation passed the House in August of that year via a 338-90 vote. Previous efforts to get a federal holiday dedicated to King failed after conservative lawmakers protested the potential costs for overtime and lost work pay, according to the House historian.

TODAY'S TRIVIA - Wilson Golden with today's question: What leading Washington institution first occupied the present site of the Rayburn House Office Building? Send your best guess my way: hcaygle@politico.com. The first person to correctly answer gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle.

GET HUDDLE emailed to your phone each morning.

**** A message from Brighthouse Financial:** We are Brighthouse Financial, a new company established by Metlife to help secure your financial future.

We specialize in annuities and life insurance - two products that play an essential role in helping to protect what you've earned and ensure it lasts. They work in tandem with the rest of your portfolio. Get to know us <https://www.brighthousefinancial.com/> **

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/tipsheets/huddle/2017/11/03/trump-leaves-for-asia-tour-brady-talks-tax-reform-today-female-lawmakers-detail-hill-harassment-lamar-smith-to-retire-223158>

To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings>

This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Emily Holden
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:59:21 PM
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

But I'm asking--have you canceled the contract with Definers?

Or did they back out of the contract on their own?

They say it was mutual because it was a "distraction." Does EPA agree?

<https://twitter.com/PounderFile/status/943172637202755584>

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](#)

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:57 PM
To: Emily Holden <eholden@politico.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

Definers was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor.

From: Emily Holden [<mailto:eholden@politico.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:51 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

So you're saying that you ended the contract because Definers was too expensive? Because they're saying they were becoming a distraction because of the news stories.

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

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Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](https://www.instagram.com/emilyhholden)

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To: Press <Press@epa.gov>

Subject: Definers contract?

Is it true EPA is ending the contract?

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](#)

To: Fimrite, Peter[PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 2/9/2018 10:26:05 PM
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Off-the-record, I do not do grants and the individual that does that has left for the day. I can get you an answer on Monday or you can just put decline to comment. I feel like I've done the best to answer as many questions as possible, instead of just one blanket statement. I will circle back on Monday but you could print without me.

From: Fimrite, Peter [mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 1:59 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

What about scrubbing documents of the words "climate change." What was the purpose?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 10:15 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

I will call you but below is an on-the-record statement regarding 10 percent cut question:

I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief

"Decisions on office reductions, if needed, will be made based on the final FY2018 budget."
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Fimrite, Peter [mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 12:58 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every employee, to EPA’s Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words “climate change” were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **“Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **“Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **“No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **“We don’t discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9 Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM

To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>

Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: @pfimrite

To: Emily Holden[eholden@politico.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
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To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Mon 8/14/2017 8:51:54 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL: EPA Evening News Highlights 8.14.17

SAD!

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Monday, August 14, 2017 4:51 PM
To: Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL: EPA Evening News Highlights 8.14.17

Good with me; no trump tweets!?!?

From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Monday, August 14, 2017 4:45 PM
To: Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: FOR APPROVAL: EPA Evening News Highlights 8.14.17

EPA Evening News Highlights 8.14.17

NTK Network: Report: Obama EPA Paid Unearned Overtime To Employees

A new report from the EPA Inspector General has shown that the Obama-era agency approved unearned overtime payments to its employees in at least one administrative region. According to the report, there were 79 instances of EPA employees receiving overtime pay that exceeded the agency's bi-weekly overtime cap in the Pacific Northwest: Most of the 79 exceedances lacked a supporting waiver request; Region 10 provided 15 waiver requests that covered only 21 of the 79 instances. The OIG's review of the 15 waiver requests showed that requests cited both emergencies and work that was critical to the mission of the agency as justification.

Politico: EPA To Revamp 2015 Power Plant Discharges Rule

EPA will conduct a new rulemaking to "potentially revise" portions of a 2015 regulation limiting toxic discharges from coal-fired power plants, according to a letter sent by Administrator Scott Pruitt to the U.S. Small Business Administration Friday and obtained by POLITICO today. The 2015 rule set new technology-based limits on heavy metals like mercury and arsenic that power plants discharge into waterways. The previous limits had not been updated in more than 30 years.

The Washington Examiner: EPA Chief, A Former Baseball Exec, Wants 'World, World Series'

President Trump's EPA chief has an idea that is sure to stir up a world debate. And it has nothing to do with the climate. Instead, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, former co-owner of Major League Baseball's AAA club in Oklahoma City, is calling for an international world series. In Iowa and appearing on WHO TV, Pruitt played along with a host's rapid-fire "Quick Six" questions, one of which was how baseball can be improved. Pruitt, who won a reputation as a marketing genius for his former Oklahoma City Redhawks, said: I think we need to do more to export the product internationally. There's such a hunger and desire in Asia particularly. We need to work on that.

E&E News: Greens launch legal war on EPA's TSCA rules

Several green groups launched a legal campaign last week against the Trump administration over a pair of rules issued by U.S. EPA under the nation's new chemicals law. Last year, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, a reform to the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act. It requires EPA to conduct risk assessments of chemicals without regard to cost and to protect vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women. At issue in the litigation are EPA's framework rules for the new law. One of them established the process and criteria for identifying high-priority chemicals for risk evaluations, while the other established the system for determining if the chemicals present an unreasonable risk to health or the environment. The administration issued final versions in June. "The activities we are announcing today demonstrate this administration's commitment to providing regulatory certainty to American businesses, while protecting human health and the environment," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said at the time.

E&E News: FERC's Chatterjee Vows To Support Coal, Nuclear

In his first substantive public remarks since being named chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission last week, Neil Chatterjee talked up the importance of coal and

"baseload power." In the comments, part of an official FERC podcast called "Open Access," Chatterjee said his first priority will be to get started on an accumulated backlog of orders. "I heard about it all through the Senate confirmation process. There's a lot of consternation out there, and I'm committed to working with my colleagues to get after it right away," Chatterjee said.

National Evening News Highlights 8.14.17

The Washington Post: Trump Denounces KKK, Neo-Nazis As 'Repugnant' As He Seeks To Quell Criticism Of His Response To Charlottesville

President Trump denounced the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis by name Monday, declaring racist hate groups "repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans," as he sought to tamp down mounting criticism of his response to the killing of a counterprotester at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville over the weekend. "Anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable," Trump said in brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, where he returned after a week of vacation in Bedminster, N.J. "We condemn in the strongest possible terms the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence. It has no place in America."

The Wall Street Journal: Trump Signs Order Increasing Trade Pressure On China

President Donald Trump took a step Monday in his effort to ramp up trade pressure on China, directing aides to explore the prospect of sanctioning Beijing for the "unfair" acquisition of American high technology. The directive, signed in a ceremony in the White House's Diplomatic Reception Room, was the first formal China trade action taken by a president who has long blasted the country for improperly aggressive commercial practices. "The theft of intellectual property by foreign countries costs our nation millions of jobs and billions and billions of dollars each and every year," Mr. Trump said. "For too long this wealth has been drained from our country while Washington has done nothing."

The Washington Post: Trump Fires Back After The CEO Of Merck Resigned From His Manufacturing Council

The chief executive of Merck said Monday in a tweet that he was resigning from President Trump's manufacturing council, saying he was doing so "as CEO of Merck and as a matter of

personal conscience” and that “America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy, which run counter to the American ideal that all people are created equal.”

Politico: Obama Team Was Warned In 2014 About Russian Interference

The Obama administration received multiple warnings from national security officials between 2014 and 2016 that the Kremlin was ramping up its intelligence operations and building disinformation networks it could use to disrupt the U.S. political system, according to more than half a dozen current and former officials. As early as 2014, the administration received a report that quoted a well-connected Russian source as saying that the Kremlin was building a disinformation arm that could be used to interfere in Western democracies. The report, according to an official familiar with it, included a quote from the Russian source telling U.S. officials in Moscow, "You have no idea how extensive these networks are in Europe ... and in the U.S., Russia has penetrated media organizations, lobbying firms, political parties, governments and militaries in all of these places."

NO TRUMP TWEETS

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NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/report-obama-epa-paid-uneared-overtime-to-employees/>

Report: Obama EPA Paid Uneared Overtime To Employees

By NTK Staff, 8/14/17

A new report from the EPA Inspector General has shown that the Obama-era agency approved uneared overtime payments to its employees in at least one administrative region.

According to the report, there were 79 instances of EPA employees receiving overtime pay that exceeded the agency's bi-weekly overtime cap in the Pacific Northwest:

Most of the 79 exceedances lacked a supporting waiver request; Region 10 provided 15 waiver requests that covered only 21 of the 79 instances. The OIG's review of the 15 waiver requests showed that requests cited both emergencies and work that was critical to the mission of the agency as justification.

These 15 approvals also lacked the proper justification, the Inspector General wrote.

Furthermore, there appeared to be no mechanisms to prevent such abuses of overtime payroll:

Based on interviews with officials and personnel, we learned that there is no clear line of responsibility to maintain documentation for waiver requests or to track requests and approvals between the region, OARM and OCFO. Neither OARM nor OCFO could provide a list of waivers for the period requested or supporting documentation.

This isn't the first time that the EPA under Scott Pruitt's leadership has moved to end the luxurious waste of taxpayer dollars at the agency. In June, Pruitt ended a \$1 million employee fitness center program, after reports of waste came in from national offices.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/08/epa-to-revamp-2015-power-plant-discharges-rule-091780>

EPA To Revamp 2015 Power Plant Discharges Rule

By Annie Snider, 8/14/17

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2015 rule set new technology-based limits on heavy metals like mercury and arsenic that power plants discharge into waterways. The previous limits had not been updated in more than 30 years.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-chief-a-former-baseball-exec-wants-world-world-series/article/2631464>

EPA chief, a former baseball exec, wants 'world, world series'

By: Paul Bedard, 8/14/17, 1:37 p.m.

President Trump's EPA chief has an idea that is sure to stir up a world debate.

And it has nothing to do with the climate.

Instead, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, former co-owner of Major League Baseball's AAA club in Oklahoma City, is calling for an international world series.

In Iowa and appearing on WHO TV, Pruitt played along with a host's rapid-fire "Quick Six" questions, one of which was how baseball can be improved.

Pruitt, who won a reputation as a marketing genius for his former Oklahoma City Redhawks, said:

I think we need to do more to export the product internationally. There's such a hunger and desire in Asia particularly. We need to work on that.

I think baseball is one of those sports we can actually truly have a world series, we can have a world competition. We've seen it in other instances and I think that's an opportunity that we need to be pursuing.

Pruitt, who sold his stake in the team after being elected Oklahoma attorney general in 2010, ended the interview with a prediction: The Chicago Cubs will win the World Series "again in the next five years."

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/08/14/stories/1060058755>

Greens launch legal war on EPA's TSCA rules

Amanda Reilly, 8/14/17

Several green groups launched a legal campaign last week against the Trump administration over a pair of rules issued by U.S. EPA under the nation's new chemicals law.

Environmentalists filed lawsuits Thursday and Friday in at least three federal appellate courts around the country seeking review of the rules, which EPA issued in June to guide risk evaluations and prioritization of chemical substances.

The new standards "leave the public at risk from chemicals commonly found in our homes, schools and workplaces," said Richard Denison, lead scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund, one of the plaintiffs.

"Our legal challenges seek to hold EPA to the law and ensure that the public is protected as Congress intended," Denison said.

Last year, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, a reform to the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act.

It requires EPA to conduct risk assessments of chemicals without regard to cost and to protect vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women.

At issue in the litigation are EPA's framework rules for the new law. One of them established the process and criteria for identifying high-priority chemicals for risk evaluations, while the other established the system for determining if the chemicals present an unreasonable risk to health or the environment. The administration issued final versions in June.

"The activities we are announcing today demonstrate this administration's commitment to providing regulatory certainty to American businesses, while protecting human health and the environment," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said at the time (E&E News PM, June 22).

"The new process for evaluating existing chemicals outlined in these rules will increase public confidence in chemical safety without stifling innovation," he said.

2nd and 4th circuits

In their lawsuits, the environmental groups accuse EPA under the new Trump administration of unlawfully weakening the rules.

EDF, which filed its lawsuit in the New York-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, said EPA reversed the position taken during the Obama administration that it must consider all of the conditions for use of a given chemical substance.

The final rule stated that the agency may "exclude certain activities that EPA has determined to be conditions of use" from its risk analysis.

In a blog post, the Natural Resources Defense Council said it opposes the new rules because they give EPA "nearly unlimited discretion" to determine which uses of a chemical it considers to determine whether a substance is unsafe.

The resulting "incomplete analysis is likely to be wrong and could lead EPA to conclude that a chemical does not pose an unreasonable risk when it actually does," NRDC senior attorney Daniel Rosenberg and senior scientist Jennifer Sass wrote in the post.

NRDC, together with the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments and Cape Fear River Watch, sued EPA over the rules in the Virginia-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

9th Circuit

Separately, Earthjustice filed a complaint Thursday in the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of the Environmental Working Group, WE ACT for Environmental Justice, the Learning Disabilities Association of America, the United Steelworkers, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Environmental Health Strategy Center and the Sierra Club.

Labor unions joined the groups, as did Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families; the Vermont Public Interest Research Group; and the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization.

The latter trio of groups is represented by Robert Sussman, a top EPA official in the Obama and Clinton administrations who has warned that the Trump administration may back down from last year's compromise reform law (Greenwire, July 20).

In statements announcing the lawsuits, groups blamed the president's choice of Nancy Beck to

serve as the top political official in EPA's chemical safety office for the changes.

Prior to joining the administration, Beck was the senior director of regulatory science policy at the American Chemistry Council, a chemical industry trade group that generally opposes stricter regulations.

"The EPA's newly adopted rules — overseen by a former high-level chemical industry official with head-spinning conflicts of interest — will leave children, communities and workers vulnerable to dangerous chemicals," Earthjustice attorney Eve Gartner said in a statement.

"This lawsuit is about one thing: holding the Trump EPA to the letter of the law and ensuring it fulfills its mandate to protect the public," she said.

Beck has pushed back against greens' concerns about her appointment (Greenwire, July 17).

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/08/14/stories/1060058757>

FERC's Chatterjee Vows To Support Coal, Nuclear

Sam Mintz, 8/14/17

In his first substantive public remarks since being named chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission last week, Neil Chatterjee talked up the importance of coal and "baseload power."

In the comments, part of an official FERC podcast called "Open Access," Chatterjee said his first priority will be to get started on an accumulated backlog of orders.

"I heard about it all through the Senate confirmation process. There's a lot of consternation out there, and I'm committed to working with my colleagues to get after it right away," Chatterjee said.

Millions of dollars of infrastructure, including major natural gas pipelines, has been in limbo since FERC Chairman Norman Bay resigned in February, leaving the body without a quorum and unable to give final approvals.

Chatterjee also said he wanted to focus on ensuring the reliability and resilience of the electric system — specifically by supporting "baseload" coal and power plants.

"I believe that generation, including our existing coal and nuclear fleet, need to be properly compensated to recognize the value they provide to the system," he said.

The former aide to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) was particularly vocal about coal. "I'm a Kentucky native. I've seen firsthand throughout my life how important a contribution coal makes to an affordable and reliable electric system," he said.

"Last year, coal provided over 80 percent of the electricity in Kentucky," he said. "As a nation, we need to ensure that coal, along with gas and renewables, continue to be part of our diverse fuel mix."

The comments align with the premise that Energy Secretary Rick Perry gave when ordering a controversial study of the electric grid: that coal and nuclear plants are essential for the grid's reliability.

Progressive and environmental groups — and many independent experts — have challenged that concept, arguing it is possible to maintain stability even while continuing to use more renewables like wind and solar, and less coal (Greenwire, July 11).

Chatterjee, who was sworn in to the commission last week along with former Pennsylvania regulator Robert Powelson, is holding the gavel only on an interim basis. Jones Day energy lawyer Kevin McIntyre will take over if and when confirmed.

McIntyre and another nominee, Democratic Senate aide Richard Glick, are scheduled to face the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee for a confirmation hearing Sept. 7.

The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/08/14/trump-denounces-kkk-neo-nazis-as-justice-department-launches-civil-rights-probe-into-charlottesville-death/>

Trump Denounces KKK, Neo-Nazis As ‘Repugnant’ As He Seeks To Quell Criticism Of His Response To Charlottesville

By David Nakamura, 8/14/17

President Trump denounced the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis by name Monday, declaring racist hate groups “repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans,” as he sought to tamp down mounting criticism of his response to the killing of a counterprotester at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville over the weekend.

“Anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable,” Trump said in brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, where he returned after a week of vacation in Bedminster, N.J. “We condemn in the strongest possible terms the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence. It has no place in America.”

Trump added: “Racism is evil and those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups that are repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans.”

The statement came two days after the president failed to specifically condemn the white supremacist rally during which a woman was killed and as many as 19 wounded by a driver who reportedly espoused racist and pro-Nazi sentiments and had taken part in the “Unite the Right” march in Charlottesville. Trump, who met Monday with Attorney General Jeff Sessions and FBI Director Christopher Wray, reiterated that the Justice Department has launched a civil rights probe into the death of Heather Heyer, 32, who was killed when a car allegedly driven by James Alex Fields Jr., of Ohio slammed into a group of counterprotesters.

On Saturday, Trump condemned “the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides,” sparking sharp criticism from Democrats, civil rights proponents and some Republicans for failing to single out and condemn the white supremacists who sparked the violence.

On Monday, Kenneth C. Frazier, CEO of Merck, said in a tweet that he was resigning from Trump's American Manufacturing Council, saying he was doing so “as a matter of personal conscience” and that “America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy.”

Trump's remarks, which were not on his daily public schedule, appeared hastily arranged in a bid to move the White House past the backlash to his performance over the weekend. Yet before addressing the Charlottesville situation, Trump opened his remarks touting the economy, noting that stock markets are near record highs and the unemployment rate hovering at a 16-year low.

And though he condemned racism, Trump did not refer to the attack on the counterprotesters as “domestic terrorism,” even as Sessions said that it met the Justice Department's definition of such.

White House aides had defended Trump's initial response to the Charlottesville unrest by saying the president was focused on uniting the country against all violent clashes. The white supremacist groups — carrying Nazi and Confederate flags and, in some cases, armed with shields, batons and firearms permitted under Virginia's open carry laws — clashed with counterprotesters, some of whom fought back with pepper spray.

Yet Trump's critics, and even some of his Republican allies in Congress, expressed outrage that in failing to specifically condemn the racist groups, the president appeared to be emboldening them. Some criticized Trump's rhetoric during his campaign for inciting violence from his supporters, targeting immigrants and other minority groups.

“While today’s delayed words are welcome, they should have been spoken on Saturday,” Vanita Gupta, president of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, said in a statement. “This unconscionable delay has undermined his moral credibility as our nation’s leader.”

Trump attempted to counter such criticism Monday. “I’ve said many times that no matter the color of your skin, we all live under the same laws, we all salute the same great flag, and we are all made by the same almighty god,” he said. “We must love each other, show affection for each other and unite together in condemnation of this hatred, bigotry and violence.”

Trump called Heyer's death tragic and said it “fills us with grief, and we send her family our thoughts, our prayers and our love,” and he also praised the service of two Virginia state troopers, H. Jay Cullen and Berke Bates, who died Saturday during a helicopter crash while on duty monitoring the march.

“These three fallen Americans embody the goodness and decency of our nation,” Trump said. “In times such as these, America has always shown its true character. Responding to hate with love, division with unity and violence with an unwavering resolve for justice.”

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-signs-order-increasing-trade-pressure-on-china-1502740357>

Trump Signs Order Increasing Trade Pressure On China

By Jacob Schlesinger, 8/14/17

President Donald Trump took a step Monday in his effort to ramp up trade pressure on China,

directing aides to explore the prospect of sanctioning Beijing for the “unfair” acquisition of American high technology.

The directive, signed in a ceremony in the White House’s Diplomatic Reception Room, was the first formal China trade action taken by a president who has long blasted the country for improperly aggressive commercial practices.

“The theft of intellectual property by foreign countries costs our nation millions of jobs and billions and billions of dollars each and every year,” Mr. Trump said. “For too long this wealth has been drained from our country while Washington has done nothing.”

While Mr. Trump’s tone was tough, the process he launched was measured. He specifically ordered his trade representative to begin a study into whether to launch a formal investigation about widespread complaints that Beijing forces multinationals to license valuable technology to Chinese companies as the price of entry into China’s markets. Aides said if the investigation does proceed, it could take a year before any decisions are made on imposing trade sanctions.

The move is part of a broader, complex diplomatic strategy of juggling Washington’s competing policy goals with China, balancing the desire for more cooperation in controlling North Korea against a desire to curb the \$347 billion bilateral trade deficit.

Mr. Trump took the action three days after he spoke by phone with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and a few hours after China announced it would ban imports of North Korean coal, iron, and seafood, enforcing United Nations sanctions aimed at curbing Pyongyang’s nuclear-weapons program.

Mr. Trump said the trade order would safeguard” the “intellectual property that is vital to our security and to our prosperity.” He also indicated, without elaborating, more such action to come, saying, as he signed the directive “this is just the beginning.”

The Trump administration’s deliberative approach drew criticism from Democrats, still smarting from Mr. Trump’s successful inroads into their base of labor-union voters in the Rust Belt with

his campaign vows to take a tougher line on trade.

“President Trump’s pattern continues: Tough talk on China, but weaker action than anyone could ever imagine,” Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.), said in a statement. “To make an announcement that they’re going to decide whether to have an investigation on China’s well-documented theft of our intellectual property is another signal to China that it is OK to keep stealing.”

Asked to respond to U.S. criticism of Beijing’s treatment of foreign intellectual property, Chinese foreign-ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said “China has formulated and improved relevant laws and regulations ... and we have raised awareness of society as a whole about intellectual property rights protection.” She added that she hoped the U.S. would recognize “China’s progress in this respect.”

In targeting Chinese intellectual-property practices, the Trump administration is picking up an issue that has becoming increasingly alarming to U.S. companies in recent years. They are worried in particular about the combination of China’s explicit industrial policy seeking self-sufficiency in a range of tech sectors like robotics and semiconductors—articulated in its “Made in China 2025” initiative—along with a range of formal and informal requirements for foreign companies to share with Chinese partners proprietary material.

“This simply is not fair,” a senior administration official said in explaining the probe. U.S. firms “should not be forced or coerced to turn over the fruits of their labor,” the official added. “The current trajectory is unsustainable.”

The China investigation is one of several initiatives launched by the Trump administration aimed at reorienting U.S. trade policy. Mr. Trump has called for an overhaul of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which he has branded a “disaster” for U.S. workers. Talks with Mexico and Canada to rewrite that pact begin Wednesday.

“The Obstructionist Democrats have given us (or not fixed) some of the worst trade deals in World History,” Mr. Trump said in a Monday morning tweet. “I am changing that fast!”

The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-leadership/wp/2017/08/14/trump-fires-back-after-the-ceo-of-merck-resigned-from-his-manufacturing-council/>

Trump Fires Back After The CEO Of Merck Resigned From His Manufacturing Council

By Jena McGregor, 8/14/17

The chief executive of Merck said Monday in a tweet that he was resigning from President Trump's manufacturing council, saying he was doing so “as CEO of Merck and as a matter of personal conscience” and that “America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy, which run counter to the American ideal that all people are created equal.”

In the statement, Kenneth C. Frazier, one of the few African American CEOs in the Fortune 500, said, “I feel a responsibility to take a stand against intolerance and extremism” and touted the power of diversity. “Our country's strength stems from its diversity and the contributions made by men and women of different faiths, races, sexual orientations and political beliefs.”

Within an hour after the statement was first issued, Trump tweeted his initial response. “Now that Ken Frazier of Merck Pharma has resigned from President's Manufacturing Council, he will have more time to LOWER RIPOFF DRUG PRICES!”

Frazier's resignation followed an outcry by critics about how President Trump had responded to protests over the weekend in Charlottesville that were led by white supremacist groups and turned violent. Many questioned why Trump had not explicitly named neo-Nazi, Ku Klux Klan or white nationalist groups when he said “we condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides,” repeating “on many sides” for emphasis.

By midday Monday, after a weekend of mounting criticism, Trump made a statement in which he denounced the groups. In brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the

White House, he said that "racism is evil and those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups that are repugnant to everything we hold dear as Americans" and "we are equal under the law and we are equal under our Constitution." He said that "anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable."

A spokesman for Merck said the company had no further comment about Frazier's decision, his tweet or the president's response. The White House press office did not immediately respond earlier Monday to a request for comment.

On Saturday afternoon, following the eruption of violence in Charlottesville that morning, Trump first made a general statement about the violence, tweeting: "We ALL must be united & condemn all that hate stands for. There is no place for this kind of violence in America. Lets come together as one!" Later Saturday, he read a statement that included his condemnation of "hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides." Critics, including Republicans in his own party, said he should directly condemn the groups by name.

Trump's swift response — and his willingness to go after an American CEO but not initially name white supremacists in Charlottesville — was noted by a number of observers Monday on social media.

Frazier is not the first corporate chieftain to resign in protest from one of the president's advisory councils. In June, following the president's announcement that he planned to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement, both Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Disney CEO Robert Iger resigned from White House advisory councils.

Lowering drug prices was a major campaign promise for Trump, and throughout the early part of the year, the president made threatening and vague statements about the prices of drugs being too high. In the midst of one of the drug industry's biggest conferences in January, Trump accused the pharmaceutical industry of "getting away with murder," fueling speculation that he might take action on drug prices that the industry has long fought — such as allowing the government to bid on drugs in the Medicare program.

During a meeting of pharmaceutical company leaders at the White House, President Trump said

that while there have been many successes in drug development, the pricing has been "astronomical" and must come down. (Reuters)

But in the intervening months, industry leaders have grown increasingly confident that any governmental actions won't harm their business models. Pharmaceutical chief executives, including Frazier, met with Trump in January and came away from the meeting with the impression that they would not face a serious effort from the White House to lower drug prices through government negotiation on Medicare drug prices.

Key leaders from across government have been meeting to discuss the issue of pricing, but based on leaked documents that have been circulating, including a potential draft executive order on drug pricing, Wall Street analysts have noted that some of the actions being proposed could actually help the pharmaceutical industry.

Politico

http://www.politico.com/story/2017/08/14/obama-russia-election-interference-241547?lo=ap_fl

Obama Team Was Warned In 2014 About Russian Interference

By Ali Watkins, 8/14/17

The Obama administration received multiple warnings from national security officials between 2014 and 2016 that the Kremlin was ramping up its intelligence operations and building disinformation networks it could use to disrupt the U.S. political system, according to more than half a dozen current and former officials.

As early as 2014, the administration received a report that quoted a well-connected Russian source as saying that the Kremlin was building a disinformation arm that could be used to interfere in Western democracies. The report, according to an official familiar with it, included a quote from the Russian source telling U.S. officials in Moscow, "You have no idea how extensive these networks are in Europe ... and in the U.S., Russia has penetrated media organizations, lobbying firms, political parties, governments and militaries in all of these places."

That report was circulated among the National Security Council, intelligence agencies and the State Department via secure email and cable in the spring of 2014 as part of a larger assessment

of Russian intentions in Ukraine, the official said.

There was no explicit warning of a threat to U.S. elections, but the official said some diplomats and national security officials in Moscow felt the administration was too quick to dismiss the possibility that the Kremlin incursions could reach the United States.

“Even if the Russians and [Russian President Vladimir] Putin had these ambitions, they were doubtful of their capacity to execute them,” the official said of the Obama administration.

Former White House officials, requesting anonymity to discuss intelligence reporting, confirmed that the administration began receiving increased traffic in 2014 about Russian disinformation and covert influence in campaigns, but said they did not recall receiving that specific warning about Russian inroads in the United States.

Ned Price, a former spokesperson for the National Security Council, rejected the idea that the administration failed to heed warnings about Russian interference in the U.S. political system or Russian cyberespionage in general.

“The Obama administration was nothing but proactive in responding to Russian aggression in all of its forms, especially as Moscow became more brazen with and following its military moves against Ukraine beginning in 2014,” Price said, citing sanctions and increased American support to NATO as evidence of the former administration’s seriousness.

But subsequent events — including Russia’s interference in the American election through hacks of the emails of the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton campaign Chairman John Podesta, among other intrusions identified by U.S. intelligence — have left many in the former administration wondering whether they could have done more.

“People have criticized us ... for not coming out more forcefully and saying it,” former CIA Director John Brennan said at the Aspen National Forum in July. “There was no playbook for this.”

On Oct. 7, 2016, about a month before the election, the administration revealed, through a statement from the director of national intelligence and the Department of Homeland Security, that the U.S. government believed Russia was behind the hacks and was seeking to interfere with the election. The revelation, which many in the White House expected to be bombshell news, was largely overshadowed by the revelation that same day of an “Access Hollywood” tape in which Donald Trump made crude and sexist comments to anchor Billy Bush.

But others in the national security community say an overly cautious Obama White House could have done more both during the campaign and in the previous months and years to alert Russia that it was aware of its intentions to subvert the U.S. democracy — along with those of some other Western countries — and would retaliate forcefully at the first sign of Russian interference.

POLITICO spoke with more than a dozen current and former officials from across the national security spectrum, including intelligence agencies, the State Department and the Pentagon. Almost all said they were aware of Russia’s aggressive cyberespionage and disinformation campaigns — especially after the dramatic Russian attempt to hack Ukrainian elections in 2014 — but felt that either the White House or key agencies were unwilling to act forcefully to counter the Russian actions.

Intelligence officials “had a list of things they could never get the signoffs on,” one intelligence official said. “The truth is, nobody wanted to piss off the Russians.”

Among the strategies put forward prior to the 2016 election were closing two Russian dachas in Maryland and New York, which were long suspected of being Russian intelligence sites, expelling diplomats and engaging in counterintelligence operations that would alert Putin to the United States’ determination to strike back against any attempts at interference in the U.S. political system.

Officials outside the White House blamed micromanagement by the National Security Council for the lack of a more forceful response, while a former NSC official says any failure to act forcefully against Russia was because of concerns by the State Department and, less frequently, the Defense Department about potential retaliation by Moscow.

“The frustrations [about lack of forceful action] are justified and, frankly, were shared by the White House,” said the former official, who requested anonymity due to this person's continuing work in Russia.

“The options were being discussed. They weren’t being implemented,” the former official added.

The State Department and Pentagon often objected to harsher measures endorsed by the intelligence community, one official said, a difference in perspective that some attributed to the fact that diplomatic staff and defense attaches were obvious targets of retaliation, rather than intelligence officers who usually work undercover.

Concerns about Russian cyberespionage and election meddling largely grew out of the events following Russia’s annexation of Crimea in March 2014, followed by an aggressive Russian effort to influence the Ukrainian presidential election that May.

A Russia-backed cyberattack against Ukraine’s voting infrastructure during the May election was thwarted at the 11th hour. The cyberintrusions — which in some cases could have changed voter tallies — were discovered just hours before what could have been catastrophic outcomes.

“The reports from sources deep inside the Russian government were alarming,” one current U.S. official who served under the Obama administration said. “We started getting stuff in April, May [of 2014] that was extraordinary about the extent of the threat and the capacities the Russians were building.”

“We were worried [Putin] would try to test us,” recalled a former Obama administration official.

The Ukraine crisis — coupled with the Kremlin’s embrace of National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, who continues to be granted asylum by Moscow — was a sobering moment for the White House, one recently departed intelligence officer and the current administration official said.

Yet the administration still was reluctant to engage in more forceful counterintelligence strategies against the Kremlin, including more aggressively tracking and tailing Russian operatives within the United States, according to five of the officials who spoke to POLITICO.

Those outside the White House said they received frustrating mixed messages: The White House would subsequently dismiss Moscow's capabilities while also citing fear of an escalation with Putin.

Price, the former NSC spokesman, denied those claims.

"We responded with the same clarity of purpose following Moscow's aggression against U.S. officials in Russia and, of course, in the face of the Kremlin's attempt to undermine the integrity of our electoral process," he said.

But several senior intelligence and administration officials recall it differently.

"It just seemed like it was difficult, especially after the Crimea and the Ukraine ... there still wasn't a willingness to more heartily engage in the effort," the former intelligence officer said.

In one particularly frustrating instance, officials said, they reiterated a longstanding desire to shut down the two Russian dachas in Maryland and New York. Amid escalating tensions, it was often presented as a way to send a message to Moscow.

"For quite some time, it was an active option. Secretary Kerry refused to consider it," the former NSC official said. "We were getting pushback from the head of the agency being harassed. That was a constant frustration."

Former Secretary of State John Kerry was overseas and unavailable for comment. But a former senior State Department official, speaking as a representative of Kerry, saw it differently. “Kerry agreed to shut down the dachas, but had not settled on the timing,” the official said.

Tensions finally reached a fever pitch in the summer of 2016. Just days before Russian operatives began releasing troves of stolen DNC emails, a CIA officer under official diplomatic cover was brutally beaten outside the U.S. embassy in Moscow. The officer managed to slip to safety inside the door of the U.S. compound but was immediately evacuated for medical care.

U.S. intelligence and law enforcement officials worked frantically to compile retaliatory options for the Obama White House. Despite being presented with several strategies — including more aggressively tailing Russian diplomats in the U.S. — it opted to do nothing immediately.

“There was some real anger,” the former intelligence officer said. “We weren’t going to mug anybody, but we could at least be more overt in our coverages. We could expel some people, we could do more overt surveillance on people.”

Another former intelligence official put it this way: “The longer we don’t push back, the harder they push.”

Even after the release of emails designed to damage Clinton’s campaign, the White House was reluctant to respond, something that several recently departed Obama-era officials have lamented.

After compiling a list of potential retaliatory options in the summer of 2016 — including kicking out more than 100 Russian diplomats, one official told POLITICO — the pushback from national security agencies was so great and varied, the NSC official said, that for months nothing was done.

“Any of these actions risked a Russian reciprocation,” the former NSC official said. “We were kind of caught in a catch-22.”

After the election, in December, the White House finally announced the expulsion of 35 diplomats and ordered the Kremlin officials out of the two Russian-owned dachas.

But in a further indication of the tensions within the Obama team, Kerry rejected suggestions that he personally break the news of the expulsions and closing of the dachas to Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, the former NSC official said. Instead, the job was left to Pat Kennedy, one of Kerry's undersecretaries.

The former State Department official, speaking for Kerry, said the option of having Kerry communicate the expulsions and closing of the dachas to Lavrov was never discussed. But the former NSC official was unmoved.

"The idea of having Kerry doing it with Lavrov was raised several times and he didn't want to do it," the NSC official said.

The expulsions and closing of the dachas were symbolic moves that stung the Kremlin, but for many intelligence officers, it was too little, too late.

While some Obama White House officials privately concede that they, too, wish there had been a more forceful response, others stand by the decisions that were made.

"People at the working level don't necessarily understand" the full scope of policy implications, one former White House official said.

Now, to the further frustration of some intelligence officers, there is little indication that, for all Trump's bluster, he'll be tougher on the Kremlin. In his first months in office, the president has signaled a willingness to work with Moscow on several fronts, and has pushed back hard against his own intelligence community's assessment that Russia actively worked to elect him to the presidency.

It's a bitter pill for many who see Trump's election as the avoidable outcome of years' worth of counterintelligence failings against Russia.

"They were warned. They underestimated it until it was too late," the current administration official said of the Obama White House and Russia, with a tinge of bitterness. "They just didn't know how to deal with the bad guys."

Michael Abboud

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Public Affairs

M: 202-564-6461

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 6/21/2017 8:17:31 PM
Subject: FW: Where are we on getting a clips service?

Cool. Thank you!

From: Hull, George
Sent: Wednesday, June 21, 2017 4:07 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Where are we on getting a clips service?

I called Joe Pounder of Definers after you sent me his contact information. I left him a message explaining my interest. Surprisingly, he hasn't called me back. I'll try him again and also by e-mail. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, June 21, 2017 3:59 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: Where are we on getting a clips service?

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Kelsey Tamborrino
Sent: Mon 2/5/2018 7:25:11 PM
Subject: RE: Hey Kelsey ...

Understandable! I'll look into this, but in the meantime I'd suggest making sure it's checked off on your settings page here: <https://www.politicopro.com/settings>

Hope that helps!

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Monday, February 05, 2018 12:28 PM
To: Kelsey Tamborrino <ktamborrino@politico.com>
Subject: Re: Hey Kelsey ...

I don't get afternoon energy. EPA does pay over 100k for this subscription so if I can get added that would be great.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 5, 2018, at 11:46 AM, Kelsey Tamborrino <ktamborrino@politico.com> wrote:

Hi Jahan — thanks for reaching out. It was included in the Afternoon Energy newsletter on Friday: <https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/afternoon-energy/2018/02/zinkes-gone-to-carolina-092603>

From: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 5, 2018 11:33 AM
Subject: Hey Kelsey ...
To: Kelsey Tamborrino <ktamborrino@politico.com>

I thought it was odd you didn't include our interview with the New York Times.

Listen to 'The Daily': A Conversation with Scott

Pruitt:<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/02/podcasts/the-daily/scott-pruitt-epa.html>

From: POLITICO Pro Energy [<mailto:politicoemail@politicopro.com>]
Sent: Monday, February 5, 2018 5:45 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Morning Energy: Not just Democrats blocking Trump nominees — CEQ nominee withdrawn — More trouble in the nuclear family

By Kelsey Tamborrino | 02/05/2018 05:43 AM EDT

With help from Darius Dixon, Eric Wolff and Alex Guillén

YOU'VE REALLY GOT A HOLD ON ME: It's not just Democrats who are obstructing President Donald Trump's nominees across key positions in federal agencies — GOP lawmakers are standing in the way, too. At least 11 Republican senators have disclosed holds on nominees for agencies including the departments of Energy, Agriculture and State, Pro's Anthony Adragna reports.

Republicans have been quick to blame Democrats for keeping the Trump administration from filling key federal positions, but the GOP holds have become common as senators turn to them for leverage to extract policy concessions from federal agencies. And it's notables since senior Republicans have raised [the possibility of changing](#) Senate rules due to the nomination backlog, and the hold-ups are causing intraparty frustration for making an already arduous confirmation process even more difficult.

Most recently, Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso announced he put a hold on an Energy nominee over the agency's practice of selling excess government-controlled uranium onto the market. And he's not the only one: Sen. [Ted Cruz](#) is objecting to an Agriculture Department nominee as he pushes for changes to the biofuel program, while Sen. [Dean Heller](#), an opponent of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, is blocking a nominee to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Senate Energy Chairman [Lisa Murkowski](#) called the holds "silly" and said her fellow Republicans should "knock it off." Read the story [here](#).

WELCOME TO MONDAY! Congrats to the Philadelphia Eagles! I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino, and RFA's Rachel Gantz was first to know New Orleans and Miami are tied for hosting the most Super Bowls, with 10 each. Miami, however, will hold the record once it hosts again in 2020. For today: Who was the first House member to represent two states? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to ktamborrino@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@kelseytm](#), [@Morning_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

HARTNETT WHITE OUT: Kathleen Hartnett White is out as nominee to lead the White House's Council on Environmental Quality, ME has confirmed. A controversial nominee, Hartnett White had faced considerable backlash for her previous comments on carbon dioxide, climate science and anti-pollution regulations, not to mention her crediting fossil fuels for helping to end slavery. Her nomination had been stalled for months, even as other energy picks moved forward.

"I respectfully withdraw my name from further consideration to be confirmed as Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality effective immediately. I want to thank President Trump for his confidence in me and I will continue to champion his policies and leadership on environmental and energy issues of critical importance to making our nation great, prosperous and secure again," Hartnett White said in a statement. "... In the best interest of facilitating confirmation of the President's nominees throughout his administration, as well the needs of my family and work, I feel it is best, at this point in time, to withdraw my name from further consideration."

The White House still had faith in Hartnett White last month, when it renominated her after her nomination had stagnated the previous year. Hartnett White had been a target of greens since her name was first brought up in late 2016. During an appearance before the Senate EPW Committee after being nominated, Hartnett White touted carbon dioxide as "necessary for life on Earth" and drew initial concern from several corn-state Republicans about calls to repeal the Renewable Fuel Standard, but then walked that back to align herself with the White House's stance.

IN THE CLEAR: The news also helps clear the way for two EPA nominations to move forward: Andrew Wheeler — whose past lobbying clients include coal producer Murray Energy — to be deputy administrator and Holly Greaves to be chief financial officer. Last week, Tom Carper, the ranking Democrat on EPW and fierce critic of Hartnett White, told EPA's Scott Pruitt he'd work to block the EPA nominees until Trump withdrew the Hartnett White nomination. "I made it clear that those nominations were going to find it difficult to move forward expeditiously as long as the nomination of Kathleen Hartnett White was still out there," Carper told reporters. On Saturday, Carper touted the news. "It was abundantly clear that leading the White House Council on Environmental Quality wasn't the right job for Kathleen Hartnett White," hetweeted. "I often say when you think you're right, when you know you're right, you must never give up. That's what we did here." The EPW Committee announced it will hold a business meeting on Wheeler's nomination on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.

NEI'S MESSY DIVORCE GOES TO COURT: NextEra Energy made a splash last month when it dropped its membership with the Nuclear Energy Institute. But now the company is suing the D.C. trade group over alleged economic retaliation. In a lawsuit filed Friday, NextEra says that NEI has refused to let them retain access to an industry-wide nuclear personnel database called PADS through March unless the company forks over \$860,000, most which NextEra says are fees related to NEI membership. "NextEra promptly notified NEI that it would not accede to this extortionate and coercive demand," the complaint, filed in the District Court for the Southern District of Florida, West Palm

Beach, states. NextEra says that they paid about \$3 million a year in NEI membership fees. The timing is also calculated to inflict pain, according to NextEra, because its St. Lucie nuclear plant is scheduled to begin a refueling operation — a process that relies heavily on PADS for vetting work, and psychological and criminal histories of hundreds of workers brought on-site — this coming Wednesday.

NextEra says it left NEI because the group was backing "bad energy policy" that was out of step with its business and would "unnecessarily harm consumers." NEI's support of Energy Secretary Rick Perry's ill-fated grid resilience proposal was particularly problematic for NextEra, as were the group's support of nuclear at the expense of other forms of generation. "NEI will use that membership fee, in part, to advocate for policies that are directly at odds with the NextEra Companies' interests and bad for the electricity industry as a whole," the company states. In our previous reporting on NEI's drama, we noted that board chairman Don Brandt described NextEra CEO Jim Robo as being "more hardened on his decision" to leave the D.C. trade association than Entergy chief Leo Denault after other utility CEO attempted to dissuade them.

NEI responded saying the claims of the lawsuit was without merit, and said for NextEra to call NEI's approach "retaliatory, or even suggest the notion of extortion, is both counter-factual and offensive to the good faith effort the offer represents." NEI said it reached out to the company in good faith to open a dialogue to help keep the industry "as unified as possible, on regulatory and other policy positions. Unfortunately, rather than even opening a dialogue NextEra immediately followed its rejection of NEI's offer with a baseless lawsuit."

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES: A New Jersey-based home improvement contractor who is married to a former household staffer of Donald and Melania Trump is now working as an EPA official, POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia reports. Steve Kopec joined EPA's Region 2 office in New York as a special assistant on Dec. 18, according to a memo obtained by POLITICO. "Steve comes to us from private industry, where he fashioned his career around customer service and organizational efficiencies," EPA Region 2 Administrator Pete Lopez wrote in the memo. "Steve is an experienced manager with skills in team building, management and organization." Andrew reports via public records that Kopec previously ran a contracting business from his home in Haskell, N.J., called Steve's Tools in Motion. His wife Dagmara previously worked for the Trump family in New York, according to a person familiar with her situation. Read it here.

RYDER NOMINATED FOR TVA: The president will nominate Memphis attorney John Ryder to the last open seat on the board of directors for the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Times Free Press reports Ryder, who will need to be confirmed by the Senate, has "served as general counsel at the Republican National Committee for the past five years and is a long-time GOP activist." Tennessee Sen. Lamar Alexander, a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said he was glad to see the news. Ryder "understands that TVA's mission is to continue to provide cheap, clean, reliable electricity for homes and businesses throughout the seven-state Tennessee Valley region," he said.

U.S. CONSIDERING VENEZUELAN OIL RESTRICTIONS: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Sunday the U.S. is considering restricting Venezuelan crude oil imports and exports of U.S. refined products to Venezuela, in order to apply pressure on President Nicolas Maduro to "return to the constitution," Reuters reports. "One of the aspects of considering sanctioning oil is what effect would it have on the Venezuelan people? Is it a step that might bring this to an end more rapidly?" Tillerson said at a news conference, referring to Venezuela's economic and political crisis. More [here](#).

A FRIENDLY WAGER: With the Eagles' Super Bowl win in the books, FERC Commissioner Cheryl LaFleur owes Robert Powelson some lobsters. Powelson [tweeted](#) on Friday that the pair should up their Super Bowl wager, which originally had the loser wear the winning team's jersey to their February open meeting. LaFleur [tweeted](#) she'd bet two Maine lobsters, to which Powelson [said](#) he'd offer up "(2) Kobe beef cheesesteaks and add a case of Victory IPA to wash them down." LaFleur [agreed](#) to those new terms, adding she would add beverages as well, likely Sam Adams. After the game, Powelson [tweeted](#) an invite to Commissioner Neil Chatterjee, after he [tweeted his own support](#) for the Patriots. "Commish, please join me in Philly for the parade. Love to host you! Fly Eagles Fly!" he said.

GOT KIGALI ON MY MIND: The Trump administration last year announced rare support for an international agreement that would reduce a greenhouse gas, but it still has a heavy lift ahead. The Hudson Institute will go over the details of the status of the amendment, including discussion of getting two-thirds of the Senate to approve it (and when the administration should submit it), and possibly also how the federal government will implement the treaty if approved. The D.C. Circuit rejected EPA's use of the Clean Air Act to implement reductions of hydrofluorocarbons, leaving supporters considering the Toxic Substances Control Act as an alternative. **If you go:** Hudson Institute, 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 400, at 9 a.m.

EXXON'S CLIMATE BOTTOM LINE: Exxon Mobil released its 2-degree scenario report late Friday, finding that even under aggressive climate policies there would be "little risk" to its investments. The report has been sought by shareholders who have been asking what the effect of policies — like the Paris climate agreement — might have on the company's bottom line. "Based on currently anticipated production schedules, we estimate that by 2040, over 90 percent of our year-end 2016 proved reserves will have been produced," the Friday report said. "Considering that the 2°C Scenarios Average implies significant use of oil and natural gas through the middle of the century, we believe these reserves face little risk." Read the report [here](#).

BREAKING DOWN THE FUEL MIX: Data from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association show "electric cooperatives' retail fuel mix nationwide is trending toward natural gas and renewable energy resources and away from coal-based generation." In a news post explaining the trend, NRECA writes that the share of co-op electricity from coal was 41 percent in 2016. That's compared with 54 percent in 2014, according to NRECA's research. According to the recently released research from Lauren Khair, NRECA regional economic analyst, and Michael Leitman, NRECA strategic analyst, "as

coal use decreased, natural gas rose from 18 percent in 2014 to 26 percent in 2016" and the "share of renewable energy resources (non-hydro) doubled from 4 percent to 8 percent for the same period." Read [more](#).

CALIFORNIA SCHEMIN': California is readying itself to fight back if the Trump administration tries to stop it from its tough focus on emissions, Bloomberg's Mark Chediak, Dana Hull and John Lippert report. During a Bloomberg New Energy Finance event Friday, Mary Nichols, chairman of the California Air Resources Board, said she thought "there would be a war with many states lining up with California" if the state's rule-setting waiver is revoked. More[here](#).

— **The Energy Information Administration broke down** California's plans on Friday to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030. More[here](#).

HEADS UP: The House will consider a few bills today under suspension of the rules, including: [H.R. 2371 \(115\)](#), the Western Area Power Administration Transparency Act; [H.R. 2888 \(115\)](#), the Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park Establishment Act; [S. 1438 \(115\)](#), the Gateway Arch National Park Designation Act and [H.R. 219 \(115\)](#), the Swan Lake Hydroelectric Project Boundary Correction Act.

BILL SPOTLIGHT: Sens. [John Boozman](#), [Jim Inhofe](#), [Cory Booker](#) and [Dianne Feinstein](#) [introduced](#) bipartisan legislation Friday to modernize investment in water infrastructure and amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014. The "Securing Required Funding for Water Infrastructure Now (SRF WIN) Act," [S. 2364 \(115\)](#), in part would authorize \$200 million annually over five years to support state revolving fund projects exclusively, and would allow thousands of vetted drinking water and wastewater projects to receive funding, effectively eliminating the need for EPA to process the loan applications.

TELECOM GOES GREEN: Following news from T-Mobile that it set a goal to achieve 100 percent renewable energy for powering its networks by 2021, AT&T has hinted it will do the same. The company [tweeted](#) last week that it "just signed a couple of the industry's largest renewable energy deals," with more details to come. Todd Larsen, executive co-director of consumer and corporate engagement at Green America, which has called on AT&T to move to 100 percent renewables, said they welcome the news. "We are pleased that AT&T is listening to the thousands of consumers who have encouraged the company to pursue clean energy and to join the other 123 [RE100](#) companies who have made the '100 percent renewable' pledge," Larson said.

MAIL CALL: Maine Sens. [Susan Collins](#) and [Angus King](#) urged leaders on the Finance committee to include language from the Biomass Thermal Utilization Act — which would qualify biomass heating equipment for renewable energy tax credits — in any tax extender legislation. Read the letter [here](#).

QUICK HITS

- Perry certain SRS has 'very bright' future ahead of it, [Aiken Standard](#).
- High-ranking Trump official attends hunting convention, [The Hill](#).
- Trump official discusses offshore drilling with governor, legislators in separate meetings, [The News & Observer](#).
- OSHA standards moot in Quinton rig explosion because of exemption for oil-and-gas industry, [Tulsa World](#).
- Document reveals ambitious reorganization timeline, [E&E News](#).

HAPPENING THIS WEEK

MONDAY

9:00 a.m. — The Hudson Institute [forum](#) on hydrofluorocarbons and the Kigali treaty, 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. — Johns Hopkins University [hosts](#) EIA Administrator Linda Capuano to present the agency's Annual Energy Outlook 2018, 1740 Massachusetts Ave NW

10:00 a.m. — House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee [hearing](#) on "DOE Modernization: Advancing the Economic and National Security Benefits of America's Nuclear Infrastructure," 2123 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources [hearing](#) on various bills, 366 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — House Natural Resources Federal Lands Subcommittee [hearing](#) on national monument bills, 1324 Longworth

11:00 a.m. — The National Association of State Energy Officials holds its [Energy Policy Outlook Conference](#), 2401 M St NW

2:00 p.m. — House Natural Resources Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs Subcommittee [hearing](#) on tribal land bills, 1324 Longworth

WEDNESDAY

9:30 a.m. — Senate Environment and Public Works Committee [business meeting](#) to consider Andrew Wheeler's nomination to be deputy administrator of EPA, 406 Dirksen.

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee [hearing](#) on various bills, 366 Dirksen

12:00 p.m. — The Women's Council on Energy and the Environment hosts a "lunch and learn," 1055 Thomas Jefferson St NW

THURSDAY

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on "Energy Infrastructure," 366 Dirksen

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. — The National Capital Chapter of the U.S. Energy Economists hosts its February lunch, 425 7th St NW

12:30 p.m. — Johns Hopkins University discussion of energy policy in India and the role of coal, 1619 Massachusetts Ave NW

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/02/not-just-democrats-blocking-trump-nominees-092892>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

McConnell floats rules change to limit debate on nominations[Back](#)

By Elana Schor | 10/31/2017 04:07 PM EDT

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) suggested on Tuesday that he would support a rules change limiting Democrats' ability to delay confirmation of President Donald Trump's nominees.

Although they cannot filibuster Trump's nominees because of previous rules changes, Democrats have tied up the Senate floor with lengthy confirmation debates — from Cabinet nominees to a series of less-senior names whose approvals were delayed during the tense battle over Obamacare repeal.

McConnell has committed to maintaining the Senate minority's power to filibuster legislation, but on Tuesday he left the door open to backing further limits on Democratic slowdowns of the confirmation process.

The consideration process for presidential nominees "is a different matter" than the legislative filibuster, McConnell said, lambasting recent Democratic slowdowns as "just simply ridiculous."

McConnell's protest rings hollow for Democrats who keenly recall his obstruction of former President Barack Obama's nominees, including Judge Merrick Garland's failure to get a hearing after Obama nominated him to the Supreme Court.

"Sen. McConnell does not come to the court with clean hands on these issues," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) told reporters when asked about the Kentucky Republican's suggestion of a future rules change. "He delayed and blocked so many of Obama's nominees."

Schumer, like many of his fellow Democrats, also noted that Trump already has gotten more judges confirmed to the federal bench than Obama did at the same point in his presidency, despite the GOP's push for a faster pace of confirmations.

McConnell cited a proposal crafted by Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) that would limit the minority's power to run out the clock after debate has been formally curtailed. Lankford began floating the idea in April as Democrats forced a procedural showdown over the confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch — who occupies the seat Garland had been nominated to fill.

The Senate currently has 30 hours of floor time to discuss a nominee after cloture is invoked to limit debate, and Lankford's plan would limit that to 8 hours.

McConnell said on Tuesday that "there may be a possibility to adjust" the amount of time Democrats have to prolong floor debate on nominees after cloture is invoked "in a way more consistent with the Senate, and the administration getting its positions filled in a timely fashion."

McConnell suggested that Lankford is seeking Democratic buy-in for the rules change, and Lankford said through a spokesman: "Conversations with my colleagues about my proposal have been positive. The American people expect us to get more work done."

But another member of GOP leadership said that bipartisanship shouldn't be a requirement in order to limit the minority's ability to force lengthy confirmation debates.

If Democrats don't scale back their delays, "I think we should do whatever is necessary, either with cooperation or without, to stop that procedure from being used to keep us from the other work we need to do," said Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt, No. 5 in Republican leadership. "It's obvious that's what they're doing."

To view online [click here](#).

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Friendly fire imperils some of GOP's own nominees[Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 02/05/2018 05:03 AM EDT

Blocking President Donald Trump's nominees is a bipartisan affair.

While Republicans have blamed Democratic obstruction for keeping positions at federal agencies from being filled by confirmed officials, some GOP lawmakers are standing in the way too. At least 11 Republican senators have disclosed holds on nominees for agencies including the departments of Energy, Agriculture and State.

It's not an unusual tactic as senators frequently use whatever leverage they have to extract policy concessions from federal agencies, but it's notable especially as senior Republicans have raised the possibility of changing Senate rules due to the nomination backlog. And the hold ups are causing intra-party frustration for making an already arduous confirmation process even more difficult.

Most recent to slap a hold on a Trump nominee is Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) — who blamed Democrats in November for turning the Senate "into the world's most paralyzed deliberative body" — when he announced his hold on an Energy nominee over the agency's practice of selling excess government-controlled uranium onto the market.

"You were unable to give me a firm commitment to immediately halt these barter, something that [Energy Secretary Rick] Perry has told me he wants to do," Barrasso told Anne White at her Jan. 18 nomination hearing to be assistant secretary for environmental management. "So for this reason, I am unable to support a confirmation at this time and withhold the confirmation until the department ends its practice of bartering excess uranium."

A spokeswoman for Barrasso declined further comment on the hold or how it's different than the tactics used by Democrats that the Wyoming Republican has frequently bashed.

Senate Energy Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) said her fellow Republicans should "knock it off," calling intra-party holds "silly."

Holds lost some power after Senate Democrats in 2013 invoked the so-called nuclear option for most nominees, allowing them to be confirmed by a simple majority, and Republicans expanded that approach to Supreme Court nominees last year.

But because the Senate operates almost entirely based on unanimous consent, a single senator can still threaten to significantly gum up the procedural works if his or her hold is not honored. And with Republicans holding only 51 seats, a GOP senator's objection carries even more weight.

It's hard to make broad conclusions about holds because they can be placed on nominees for any reason and don't always have to be disclosed, although the Senate has taken some steps

to add transparency to the process. A resolution passed in 2011 requires senators to make public their holds on nominees or legislation if they submit written objections to party leaders. During the 2011-12 session of Congress, 24 objections were published, but that number fell to nine the following session and rose to 34 in the 2015-16 session, according to the Congressional Research Service.

In 2017, the first half of the current congressional session, eight objections were published, half of which came from Iowa Republican Chuck Grassley, according to a POLITICO review of the Congressional Record.

Those numbers are not comprehensive, CRS warns, noting that senators do not have to publish their plans if they tell leaders in person or over the phone that they would put a hold on a nominee. Several other Republicans announced holds last year that were not included in the Congressional Record.

Ted Cruz is objecting to an Agriculture Department nominee to push for changes to national ethanol policy. Dean Heller, an opponent of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, is blocking a nominee to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Cory Gardner is blocking Justice Department nominees over marijuana policy. Majority Whip John Cornyn blocked the nominee for the number two spot at OMB over Hurricane Harvey relief funding. John McCain placed holds on several Defense nominees over inadequate information on wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Tim Scott announced a hold on Trump's trade nominee to draw attention to issues in his state. Sen. Thom Tillis is standing in the way of a DHS nominee to pressure the agency on immigration. Todd Young stalled a State Department nominee to force action related to Saudi Arabia and Yemen. And Rand Paul put his own hold on a DOJ nominee over his past work on NSA surveillance. There may be even more anonymous holds that have not drawn as much attention.

Democrats occasionally engaged in some of the same tactics during the Obama presidency. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), for example, placed separate holds on Obama's FDA nomination in January 2016 over his ties to the drug industry and handling of the opioid epidemic. Markey and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) placed a hold on a Democratic FCC nominee back in November 2016 as well.

This is an "uncommon period" for intra-party holds that suggests some lawmakers feel they aren't being given adequate input into some of the agency selections, according to Joshua Huder, a senior fellow at the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University.

"Holds have definitely lost their partisan edge certainly. They haven't gone away," Huder said.

But, he added, it is "virtually impossible to tell which holds are because they have personal differences with a nominee and when they're holding something up for leverage on something else."

Last fall, delays in confirming EPA picks led Jim Inhofe to place his own hold on a FERC

nominee, Democrat Rich Glick, that had the impact of snarling an entire package of carefully negotiated Energy, Interior and FERC nominees. Inhofe eventually lifted his hold in early November, allowing the confirmation of a pair of FERC commissioners.

Cruz slapped a hold on Bill Northey for a senior USDA post last fall after several corn-state Republican peers blocked consideration of several EPA picks in committee as part of an effort to extract concessions on the Renewable Fuel Standard. That prompted Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to describe the delay in confirmation as "pretty crippling, quite frankly." A spokesman for Cruz didn't respond to request for comment on what he would need to lift his hold.

Heller placed his own hold on GOP NRC nominee Annie Caputo last summer. His office declined to comment on the status of the hold, though Caputo remains waiting for Senate action.

Congressional veterans aren't surprised by the tactics that can be used to extract policy concessions or commitments from federal agencies.

"Elected officials will frequently use whatever leverage is available to accomplish political goals they deem to be important," former Kentucky Rep. Ed Whitfield told POLITICO in an email.

Robert Dillon, a former aide for Murkowski, said Republicans are "not monolithic" and senators will push for the interests of their states even when their positions on nominations are "at odds with leadership."

Several senators said the hold process was something for each lawmaker to navigate on their own and supported the right to block nominations, even those that came from their own party.

"Every senator has the reason and prerogative to put holds no matter which party the president comes from," Steve Daines (R-Mont.) told POLITICO. "I respect — but may not always agree — with where my fellow senators may land on these issues."

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Carper vows to block EPA nominees until White withdraws[Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 01/30/2018 01:14 PM EDT

Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) told EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt today that he will work to block two key EPA nominees until President Donald Trump withdraws his controversial

nominee to lead the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

"I made it clear that those nominations were going to find it difficult to move forward expeditiously as long as the nomination of Kathleen Hartnett White was still out there," Carper told reporters after a brief private conversation with Pruitt following a hearing. White, who has questioned climate science and criticized anti-pollution regulations, would not be directly connected to EPA, but leading CEQ would give her broad influence over environmental policy across the administration.

The EPA nominations in question are Andrew Wheeler to be deputy administrator and Holly Greaves to be chief financial officer. Carper declined to say whether Wheeler's past lobbying work, particularly for coal producer Murray Energy, would threaten his nomination as well.

Carper has criticized White since she appeared before the committee last year and gave what he called "perhaps the worst performance I've seen in 17 years." White has stalled as Democrats seek the two moderate Republican votes needed to quash her nomination.

Pruitt "said he'd think about that and maybe we'd have a chance to talk further down the road," Carper told reporters.

To view online [click here](#).

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DOE rule offers nuclear industry much-wanted attention[Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 11/21/2017 05:00 AM EDT

The nuclear industry may be a collateral winner in President Donald Trump's effort to end the "war on coal."

Nuclear power plant owners spent much of the past decade at odds with their coal-fired peers over climate change, but now they have found their fates intertwined thanks to the Trump administration's view that protecting the old workhorses of the electric grid is key to maintaining a reliable supply of power.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry's proposal to alter electricity markets would be [a boon for coal companies](#) like Murray Energy and the utilities supplied by its mines, but the proposal allows nuclear companies to come along for the ride — welcome relief for an industry that often felt left out of the Obama administration's climate push despite its carbon-free profile.

"It's not surprising to see nuclear energy and coal in there together because they were sort of the odd couple out in the Obama administration. With respect, their focus was on

renewables," said David Blee, who heads the U.S. Nuclear Infrastructure Council, a coalition of companies working in the sector. "This administration is making up for lost time in those areas."

The Obama administration disappointed the nuclear industry by not providing much in the way of explicit incentives for existing reactors, despite relying on the carbon-free electricity they provide to hit the Clean Power Plan's emissions reduction target.

But now the Energy Department has drawn nuclear into the new administration's pro-coal fold by basing its grid rule on a characteristic the two technologies share. Perry's proposal calls for consumers to pay power plants operating in regional electricity markets for keeping 90 days of fuel supply onsite. Most coal-fired power plants in the PJM Interconnection could qualify, as would virtually all nuclear plants in those areas because reactors only refuel every 18 to 24 months.

"Maybe in previous administrations there was some support [for nuclear power] but I feel this administration has been much more vocal," Nuclear Energy Institute CEO Maria Korsnick said, noting that one of Perry's first trips as DOE chief was to the long-stalled Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site. "The challenge is how we lever that to make the most of it. This notice of proposed rulemaking is one example of their willingness to put something in play."

Trump and Perry's broadening strategy also may help the Energy Department's grid proposal gain support on Capitol Hill and survive inevitable court challenges.

"If your real focus here is to understand where we are with our baseload generation then you have to put those two together even though they are a pairing that, from an emissions perspective, are very different," said Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski. "I don't know that it makes it a better pairing but it probably does build a broader constituency."

Illinois Rep. John Shimkus, a senior GOP member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, echoed that sentiment. "For me to be able to say it's 'baseload' and say it's coal and nuclear, and have that baseload argument, that's helpful," he said.

FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee, a former top aide to Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) who is now in charge of responding to DOE's proposal, says he wants to put in place an "interim" rule that would keep coal and nuclear plants online until the commission decides on long-term market changes. And he says climate advocates should be cheering the fact that nuclear plants would get a lifeline.

"One of the things that has been perplexing to me about the opposition to the interim step that I'm hoping to take to throw a lifeline to some of these baseload units is if we're going to seriously consider taking steps to mitigate U.S. emissions, nuclear power has to be part of that conversation," he said at a CQ Roll Call event last week. "To me, it seems very short-sighted to simultaneously stress the need to mitigate carbon emissions and not care about maintaining our nuclear fleet moving forward."

The Trump administration has largely managed to avoid criticism from nuclear backers for its efforts to pull back other federal climate programs that could have benefited the industry. Under Trump they are also getting much-wanted attention to their priorities, such as Yucca Mountain, a comprehensive review of U.S. nuclear energy policy led by the White House, and a conditional commitment to provide additional financing for the over-budget Vogtle nuclear project in Georgia.

"From our perspective, [we see] a real re-commitment to, frankly, the most important clean energy resource in the country," said Rich Powell, the executive director of the ClearPath Foundation, a conservative group that backs low-emissions energy sources.

"They may not call that a climate strategy, or a climate play," Powell added. "But in actuality, that is a very important measure on carbon."

There's also a legal upside of expanding the target audience beyond coal, said Alison Silverstein, an analyst who worked on DOE grid study earlier this year.

"Nuclear is still in the game principally because the secretary glommed onto the term baseload and defined it as coal and nuclear. And there is now ... no way to separate them," she said. "If you are trying to find a legal argument to keep coal plants open with a FERC rule, the broader you can make the applicability, the harder it is to lose an argument that the rule is overly discriminatory."

But Silverstein, a former top aide to ex-FERC Chairman Pat Wood, added: "If I were owning nuclear generation within Entergy, FirstEnergy or Exelon, I'd be keeping my head down and let the coal guys do the work, and seeing what I can get."

Many coal plants, she said, are no longer baseload providers but that "nuclear is the true baseload resource."

For all the talk of aligning coal with nuclear despite their often disparate missions, Illinois Rep. Bobby Rush said don't expect him or his fellow Democrats to embrace coal anytime soon.

"That was the obvious attempt to protect coal by adding nuclear to it but I don't think that dog's going to hunt," he said. "I don't see any Democrats who want to change their position on coal by the fact of them adding nuclear. I think that, for the foreseeable future, coal is not going to be one of the options."

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Husband of former Trump household aide scores government job [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 02/02/2018 05:53 PM EDT

A home improvement contractor married to one of Donald and Melania Trump's former household staffers is now working as an official at the Environmental Protection Agency, the latest example of someone with a personal connection to the Trump family finding work in the administration.

New Jersey-based Steve Kopec joined EPA's Region 2 office in New York as a special assistant on Dec. 18, according to a memo obtained by POLITICO. "Steve comes to us from private industry, where he fashioned his career around customer service and organizational efficiencies," EPA Region 2 Administrator Pete Lopez wrote in the memo. "Steve is an experienced manager with skills in team building, management and organization."

According to public records, Kopec previously ran a contracting business from his home in Haskell, New Jersey, called Steve's Tools in Motion. Kopec's wife, Dagmara, previously worked for the Trump family in New York, according to a person familiar with her situation.

Photographs posted on Facebook in recent months show the Kopecs visiting the White House and mingling with senior administration officials.

Trump, who appointed his daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner to senior White House roles, has made a habit of appointing people with close ties to his family or businesses rather than experienced policymakers or political hands. His White House social media director, Dan Scavino, started working for him years ago as a [caddy](#), and his first [security director](#), Keith Schiller, traveled with him from the Trump Organization to the White House.

In June, Trump appointed Lynne Patton, a party planner who arranged events at Trump golf courses as well as Eric Trump's 2014 wedding, to head the New York office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Scott Amey, the Project on Government Oversight's general counsel, said there has been a pattern of "questionable hiring" across both Republican and Democratic administrations for decades, noting that presidents' friends and acquaintances often get tapped for ambassadorships and other top job.

But hiring people at government agencies with little relevant experience can backfire, he said.

"If you put friends in high places and they don't have the proper qualifications it can have disastrous results for the agency and for taxpayers," Amey said. "We hope that public service positions are filled with people that are qualified to best serve the public interest."

Steve Kopec did not answer multiple calls to his office line and didn't respond to multiple requests for comment via email. Dagmara Kopec did not respond to multiple emails. Lopez, the EPA Region 2 administrator, also did not respond to questions about the circumstances of Steve Kopec's hiring.

The White House declined to offer an on-the-record response to questions about Kopec's hiring. "We appreciate Mr. Kopec's service," a White House official said.

It's unclear who made the decision to hire Kopec, or whether EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt was involved. Pruitt, the former Oklahoma state attorney general, has grown close to Trump in recent months and is eyeing other jobs in the administration.

"Mr. Kopec is a hard-working, dedicated employee and we appreciate his service, in supporting environmental protection efforts in New York, New Jersey, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico," EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said in a statement.

An EPA official added that Kopec "performs administrative and support services" for the agency's Region 2 administrator. The official said he isn't writing policy for the agency and does not serve in a technical or scientific role.

Kopec, according to the official, speaks four languages and travels multiple hours a day to the EPA office in New York from his home in New Jersey.

Other administration officials stressed that Kopec does not hold a senior position at the agency, with one official saying he makes \$66,215 a year.

Both Dagmara and Steve Kopec are originally from Poland. Steve often goes by his Polish name, Slawomir.

The Kopecs appear to have made repeated visits to the White House in recent months.

One photo posted in September 2017 shows Dagmara Kopec posing on the South Lawn of the White House with communications director Hope Hicks, counselor Kellyanne Conway and press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders.






Photos from January — including one with Steve Kopec, Melania Trump and the president — appear to be from a White House Christmas party.

Another photo posted by Kopec in September shows a plate of food with the caption, "My first dinner at the White House."

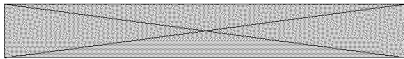
He also posted a photo of himself sitting in a yellow chair in what appeared to be the White House Diplomatic Reception Room. The picture caption reads: "I wait for my guest." It wasn't clear whom he meant.

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Sent: Sun 9/24/2017 3:32:43 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by UC Davis: TRUMP vs. THE NFL -- Could GRAHAM-CASSIDY be alive? -- POLITICO GETS RESULTS: Price stops flying private on gov't dime -- POOL REPORTS from JEH JOHNSON's 60th birthday party and KATIE WALSH/MIKE SHIELDS wedding

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by UC Davis

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Sunday morning. WHAT EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT -- TRUMP'S SUNDAY MORNING THOUGHTS -- @realDonaldTrump at 6:44 a.m.: "If NFL fans refuse to go to games until players stop disrespecting our Flag & Country, you will see change take place fast. Fire or suspend!" ... **at 7:13 a.m.:** "...NFL attendance and ratings are WAY DOWN. Boring games yes, but many stay away because they love our country. League should back U.S."

-- **@RyanLizza:** "Goes to sleep threatening nuclear war. Wakes up suggesting boycott of NFL."

-- **THE FIRST NFL GAME TODAY: "Jaguars and Ravens players kneel during national anthem, Baltimore owner supportive of demonstration,"** by N.Y. Daily News' Zachary Ripple: "Jaguars owner Shad Khan, the only minority owner in the NFL, also made a definitive statement, locking arms with his players during the anthem. Khan is one of several league owners to have contributed \$1 million to Trump's inaugural committee. Ravens coach John Harbaugh was also on the sidelines locking arms with his players during the national anthem. ... Following the performance of the U.S. anthem, every player responded by standing during the performance of 'God Save the Queen.'" <http://nydn.us/2fqus8p>

-- **@BenSasse:** "NFL players: You have the right to protest Trump tmrw. But aren't there better ways than kneeling before the flag soldiers died to defend?" ... **@Patriots:** "Statement from #Patriots Chairman & CEO Robert Kraft" -- the first sentence: "I am deeply disappointed by the tone of the comments made by the President on Friday." <http://bit.ly/2fpP8xn>

N.Y. POST COVER -- "Trump trades blows with NBA, NFL ... JOCK SCRAP"

<http://nyp.st/2wey0O2>

SUNDAY BEST -- MARTHA RADDATZ talks with **STEVEN MNUCHIN** on **ABC'S**

"THIS WEEK" -- RADDATZ: "With all the urgent issues -- Korea, healthcare, why is the president etch talking about NFL players and disinviting NBA players to the White House?" **MNUCHIN :** "You know, the NFL has all different types of rules -- you can't have stickers on your helmet. You have to have your jerseys tucked in. I think what the president is saying is that the owners should have a rule that players should have to stand in respect for the national anthem. This isn't about Democrats, it's not about Republicans, it's not about race, it's not about free speech. They can do free speech on their own time, that this is about respect for the military and the first responders and the country."

RADDATZ: "The president is calling them SOBs. Is that the kind of language, no matter how you feel about the issue, that he should be using?" **MNUCHIN:** "I think the president can use whatever language he wants to use."

-- **JOHN DICKERSON** talks with **NRSC CHAIRMAN CORY GARDNER (R-COLO.)** on **CBS's "FACE THE NATION":** **DICKERSON:** "You spoke out about the president's tepid reaction to the violence in Charlottesville. The president has now stepped into the middle of the controversy about the NFL. I just wonder what you make of his remarks this week." **GARDNER:** "Look, I made it very clear in the aftermath of Charlottesville that there is no room in this country for hate, that the KKK, Neo-Nazis, white supremacist groups are hateful, that there's no room for them, and we must call evil by its name. And that is the KKK, Neo-Nazis, and white supremacists. When it comes to this recent spat with the NFL, look, there are far more important things that we ought to be focusing on. You've mentioned them. North Korea, Iran, concern about the health care bill. That's what I'm going to continue to focus on, making sure that we take care of this country's needs in a way that people know they're better off."

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE ALERT, HEALTH CARE EDITION... BUT WE'RE STILL

SKEPTICAL -- Some Senate Republicans think the Graham-Cassidy bill is still very much alive. These senior GOP aides say if they get the bill onto the floor, they can address some senators' concerns in the debate process. Others say the bill will be refined in the coming days to address problems. We're a bit skeptical, since many of the concerns that have been expressed are fundamental -- for example, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) says he wants a months-long process. Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) continues to be a hard no. And it's unclear how Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) get to yes. But anything can happen these days, so we thought we'd flag for you.

WHAT YOU SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT: If the Senate does pass something, the House will have to turn around and pass it without making any changes to the bill. That's tricky for the unruly chamber. They come into session Monday night and leave Thursday.

MORE SUNDAY BEST -- JAKE TAPPER talks to **SEN. SUSAN COLLINS (R-MAINE)** on **CNN's "STATE OF THE UNION"**: **TAPPER**: "Your vote is pivotal on the Graham-Cassidy health care bill. Where are you? Yes or no?" **COLLINS**: "Jake, it's very difficult for me to envision a scenario -- scenario where I would end up voting for this bill. I have a number of serious reservations about it. I'm concerned about the impact on the Medicaid program, which has been on the books for more than 50 years and provides healthcare to our most vulnerable citizens, including disabled children and low-income seniors."

"I'm concerned about the impact on costs and coverage. We already have a problem under the Affordable Care Act with the cost of premiums and deductibles. And, finally, I'm very concerned about the erosion of protections for people with preexisting conditions, like asthma, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, and what it would mean to them."

-- CHUCK TODD talks to **SEN. RAND PAUL (R-Ky.)** on **NBC's "MEET THE PRESS"**: **TODD**: "All right, senator, in the president's words, are you going to come around?" **PAUL**: "Well, I've always been a yes for a repeal. But the bill, unfortunately, the Graham-Cassidy bill basically keeps most of the Obamacare spending, almost all of the spending, and just reshuffles and block grants it to the states. So, block granting Obamacare doesn't make it go away. It just means you're keeping all the money we've spending through Obamacare, most of it; reshuffling it; taking the money from Democrat states and giving it to Republican states. I think what it sets up is a perpetual food fight over the formula."

TODD: "If you cannot accept the block-grant concept, then there is no way you'll ever support this bill. Is that fair to say? Because that's the centerpiece of this bill." **PAUL**: "Well, they could remove the block grants from it. And then, we could vote on what we actually all agree on."

HEADS UP: The Federal Aviation Administration's authority runs out at the end of the week. Congress also has to deal with that this week.

-- @seungminkim: "! @LindseyGrahamSC on him, RonJohn: 'We're not going to vote for a budget resolution that doesn't allow the health care debate to continue.'" **NOTE**: Coupling health-care repeal and tax reform is plausible, but would be incredibly difficult. It also means Republicans would be continuing to work on health care into 2018.

-- WAPO's DAVE WEIGEL and **SEAN SULLIVAN**, with an **IOWA CITY** dateline: **"Graham is 'pressing on' with the health-care bill. Other GOP senators signal they're moving on"**: "Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) looked out at hundreds of Democrats crowded into a tense town hall meeting Friday afternoon and told them that they'd won. Just an hour earlier, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) had come out against the GOP's latest attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act on partisan terms."

"I hope that Lamar and Patty can come back again together, hopefully next week," said Ernst, referring to Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Sen. Patty Murray (D-

Wash.), who had been working on a bipartisan bill to stabilize the ACA. 'We can pick back up and try again.' ...

"Republican Senate aides have hinted in recent days at the possibility that new language in the bill might be released at some point. On Saturday, Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price said in an interview on Fox News that Republicans were 'refining' the legislation. Still, there are no clear resolutions to the problems facing Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.): Time and diminishing support."
<http://wapo.st/2xBnG6h>

***** **A message from UC Davis:** As the No. 1 agricultural university in the nation, UC Davis understands how food touches every living thing and what's at stake if we don't answer its challenges. Our research innovations and partnerships with farms, industry and policymakers around the world help ensure healthy, safe food for all. Learn more at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD -- AP'S STEVE PEOPLES in WESTFIELD, NEW JERSEY: "Vulnerable N.J. Republican navigates messy Trump era politics": "This is not President Donald Trump's dinner party. Republican Rep. Leonard Lance, standing in the middle of Ferraro's dimly lit restaurant dining room, says it's not necessary to build a wall along the entire U.S. border with Mexico. He raises concerns about the White House's promised tax overhaul. And he condemns the brash personalities that have come to define the GOP in the age of Trump.

"His personality and mine are vastly different. I'm comfortable with my personality,' Lance says as 19 men gathered for a private meeting of the Republican National Lawyers Association pick through their salads. ...

"I will support him where I agree with him and I will not support him where I disagree with him,' Lance told The Associated Press in an interview inside his Westfield office, where the only photograph on the wall features Lance alongside former presidential nominee Mitt Romney, who once personified the 'Never-Trump' movement."
<http://bit.ly/2jU5teZ>

TRUMP'S WEEK -- Monday: Lunch with VP Mike Pence and dinner with grassroots leaders ... **Tuesday:** President of Spain comes to D.C. ... **Wednesday:** Trip to Indiana to speak about tax reform. ... **Friday:** Trump speaks to the National Association of Manufacturers board.

POLITICO GETS RESULTS -- "Tom Price to halt taxpayer-funded travel on private jets: POLITICO has identified more than \$400,000 in charter jet spending for the HHS secretary's travels since May," by Dan Diamond: "Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price told Fox News on Saturday that he'll stop his taxpayer-funded travel on private jets, pending a formal review by his department's inspector general. 'We've heard the criticism. We've heard the concerns. We take that very seriously and have taken it to heart,' Price said.

"Price continued to take charter jets after a POLITICO investigation identified that the HHS secretary had been chartering private planes to conduct official business for months. The cost of his trips this past week was \$56,500, according to a federal contract. An HHS spokesperson said this past week's schedule was already set and the plane had been pre-booked before POLITICO raised questions about Price's travels. POLITICO has now identified more than \$400,000 in charter jet spending for Price's travels since May." <http://politi.co/2jWYdiG>

-- FROM DAN: "Price's decision follows a week of scoops by POLITICO, starting with an investigation by me and Rachana Pradhan that revealed the HHS secretary had been chartering private planes to conduct official business for months. ... Price on Saturday justified the charter trips as necessary for responding to the opioid crisis and hurricanes. However, POLITICO identified at least 10 distinct charter flights since May that were not related to either the opioid crisis or hurricane response, including flights to conferences in San Diego and Aspen, Colorado."

JMART'S GOOD POINT ON ALABAMA -- ROY MOORE as 2017 version of **TODD AKIN** -- "Reading from prepared remarks at a debate on Thursday in Montgomery, Mr. Moore declared that 'crime, corruption, immorality, abortion, sodomy, sexual perversions sweep our land.' And appearing at a Baptist church last month in Jasper, Mr. Moore mused about what same-sex marriage could lead to. 'Maybe you can marry a horse or a cow, or five men or five women,' he said. It is the sort of message that terrifies Republican elites, who fear he could be a more weaponized version of Todd Akin, the 2012 Missouri Senate candidate who lost after saying women's bodies could block a pregnancy in cases of 'legitimate rape.'"

"Roy Moore would be the Todd Akin of 2017 and 2018 for every Republican on the ballot,' said Karl Rove, the Republican strategist, who is aligned with the Senate Leadership Fund. 'Republicans will be asked, 'Do you agree homosexuality should be punished by death, do you believe 9/11 was a result of God's anger?' He'll say outrageous things, the media will play it up, and every Republican will be asked, 'Do you agree with that?'" <http://nyti.ms/2fIN9RI>

ERIC GELLER: "Breaking nuclear deal could bring hacking onslaught from Iran": "A move by President Donald Trump to discard the Obama-era nuclear deal with Tehran could bring a swift retaliation from an increasingly aggressive Iranian hacker army. Some of those attacks may target America's power plants, hospitals, airports and other pieces of critical infrastructure, multiple cyber experts that track Tehran's hackers are warning. Iran's current Western hacking is limited almost entirely to commercial espionage and dissident surveillance, but the country could quickly redirect its efforts in the event of a rupture of the nuclear pact.

"Iran has spent years honing its digital skills through cyber campaigns that have pummeled regional adversaries, stolen trade secrets from foreign competitors and destroyed computers at the oil giant Saudi Aramco. And initially, the country also aimed

its cyber forces at the U.S., launching a barrage of distracting attacks on the financial sector and even successfully infiltrating a dam in New York state. But after the U.S. and six partners began discussions with Iran in 2013 to lift some economic sanctions in exchange for limits on Tehran's nuclear program, the country's hackers have largely spared the U.S., focusing instead on industrial espionage and hitting rival Middle Eastern powers." <http://politi.co/2y1ecIP>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Trump cranks up North Korea threats as Pyongyang holds anti-U.S. rally," by Reuters' Haejin Choi in Seoul and Michelle Nichols at the U.N.:

"U.S. President Donald Trump dialled up the rhetoric against North Korea again at the weekend, warning the country's foreign minister that he and leader Kim Jong Un 'won't be around much longer', as Pyongyang staged a major anti-U.S. rally. North Korea's Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho told the United Nations General Assembly on Saturday that targeting the U.S. mainland with its rockets was inevitable after 'Mr Evil President' Trump called Pyongyang's leader a 'rocket man' on a suicide mission."

<http://reut.rs/2xBNIfI>

-- **@realDonaldTrump** at 11:08 p.m.: "Just heard Foreign Minister of North Korea speak at U.N. If he echoes thoughts of Little Rocket Man, they won't be around much longer!"

-- **@jimsciutto**: "Breaking: U.S. B-1B bombers fly in show of force off #North Korea coast, farthest north of DMZ in 21st century" ... "And here is one of those B1Bs on takeoff": <http://bit.ly/2fpf8c3>

NEW WAPO/ABC NEWS POLL -- "Poll: Far more trust generals than Trump on N. Korea, while two-thirds oppose preemptive strike," by WaPo's Scott Clement and Phil Rucker: "Two-thirds of Americans oppose launching a preemptive military strike against North Korea, with a majority trusting the U.S. military to handle the escalating nuclear crisis responsibly but not President Trump, a new Washington Post-ABC News poll finds. Roughly three-quarters of the public supports tougher economic sanctions on North Korea in an attempt to persuade it to give up its nuclear weapons, while just about one-third think the United States should offer the isolated country foreign aid or other incentives. ...

"Overall, Trump's image continues to be negative, with 39 percent of Americans approving and 57 percent disapproving of the president's job performance. But the poll finds that clear majorities approve of Trump's response to recent hurricanes and support the agreement he struck with Democrats providing emergency disaster-relief funding and raising the nation's debt limit." <http://wapo.st/2fq0Rvy>

BIG SUNDAY READ -- BOSTON GLOBE SPOTLIGHT TEAM -- "Secrets in the sky:

The United States remains an easy mark for drug dealers, terrorists and others who prize anonymity when registering aircraft or getting licensed to fly. So much for the lessons of 9/11": <http://bit.ly/2jUJ7tQ>

IN THE SKIES -- A Saudi Arabian registered A310 landed at Andrews Air Force Base from Newark Saturday afternoon. <http://bit.ly/2fhQuGs>

MAYBE GARY'S NOT DONE AFTER ALL -- "Yellen and Cohn Said to Be on Shortlist to Lead Federal Reserve," by NYT's Kate Kelly and Binyamin Appelbaum: "The White House has created a list of about a half-dozen candidates to be the next leader of the Federal Reserve, including its current chairwoman, Janet L. Yellen, and the president's chief economic adviser, Gary D. Cohn, according to two administration officials and a third person with knowledge of the process.

"The list also includes Jerome H. Powell, a member of the Fed's board of governors; Kevin Warsh, a former Fed governor; and the Stanford University economist John B. Taylor, the officials said. Preliminary interviews with some candidates have already begun with an eye toward presenting finalists to President Trump later this year. Ms. Yellen, whose four-year term ends in February, has been unusually successful in achieving the Fed's goals of minimizing unemployment and moderating inflation. But Mr. Trump, while praising her performance, has said that he may decide not to reappoint her. ...

"Mr. Trump has deputized four officials to lead the selection process for the Fed's next chairman, said one person familiar with the search: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin; two of Mr. Cohn's aides on the National Economic Council, Jeremy Katz and Andrew Olmstead; and John DeStefano, the White House personnel director." <http://nyti.ms/2fplmZs>

2020 WATCH -- "Biden rips Trump over race in South Carolina return," by Gabe Debenedetti in Charleston: "Former Vice President Joe Biden on Saturday evening urged Americans to stand up to hate groups - and took direct aim at President Donald Trump, who he said 'has publicly proclaimed the moral equivalency of Neo-Nazis, Klansmen, and those who oppose their hate.' Speaking at the centennial fundraising dinner for the Charleston branch of the NAACP, Biden said, 'This is a moment for this nation to declare what this president can't with any clarity, consistency, or vision: there is no place in America for hate groups.' ...

"The address was the latest, and most searing, in Biden's series of denunciations of the president and the current tenor of politics. It's been a rapidly escalating effort that far outstrips former President Barack Obama's Trump-era political work - and which has poured fuel on the speculation that Biden is considering a third run for the White House." <http://politi.co/2wdGo0j>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Baltimore Ravens players kneel down during the playing of the U.S. national anthem

before an NFL football game against the Jacksonville Jaguars at Wembley Stadium in London, on Sept. 24. This is the first NFL game since President Donald Trump said players should be fired for "disrespecting our flag." | Matt Dunham/AP Photo

SUNDAY BEST, PART III -- CHRIS WALLACE talks to **BILL GATES** on "Fox News Sunday": **WALLACE** on his conversation with President Trump earlier this year:

WALLACE: "But it didn't have the impact you hoped?" **GATES:** "Well, in terms of the first budget that he came out with, no. That was a disappointment to us. It was taking the medical research budget, called the NIH bringing that down fairly dramatically. Taking the aid programs, including the on-going HIV commitments and bringing those, so definitely I was disappointed in that."

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Merkel bids for fourth term as Germans head to the polls," by AP's Kirsten Grieshaber in Berlin: "Chancellor Angela Merkel was widely expected to win a fourth term in office as Germans went to the polls on Sunday in an election that is also likely to see the farthest right-wing party in 60 years, the anti-migrant Alternative for Germany, win seats in parliament. ... The latest polls had Merkel's conservative bloc at 34 to 37 percent support, the center-left Social Democrats with 21 to 22 percent and the anti-migrant Alternative for Germany, or AfD, with 10 to 13 percent support."
<http://bit.ly/2hrC8Ef>

DEEP DIVE -- "The Metals Magnate And Manafort: A Kremlin Confidant Is Drawn Into The Trump Investigation," by Mike Eckel and Christopher Miller in Radio Free Europe: "Sometime in the mid-2000s, [Oleg] Deripaska connected with a Russian named Konstantin Kilimnik, whose education at Russia's Military University for Foreign Languages has led to speculation that he is employed by intelligence agencies, something he has denied. Kilimnik began working for Manafort in 2005 ... Asked about his conversations with Manafort, Kilimnik told RFE/RL on September 21 that they discussed the U.S. election campaign, but he declined to describe the e-mail in detail or to say whether there was an effort to reach out to Deripaska.

"There were millions of emails. [...] we worked for 11 years. And we discussed a lot of issues, from Putin to women,' Kilimnik said via text message. ... Kilimnik wrote in another September 21 message[:]' They are tough investigators and probably will get Manafort for some financial crap. With that many years of international clients no one can be 100% clean.'" <http://bit.ly/2y0X8MJ> (h/t @KenVogel)

STEPH CURRY SPEAKS, via NYT's Scott Cacciola in Oakland: "'I don't know why he feels the need to target certain individuals rather than others,' Curry, a two-time N.B.A. most valuable player, said at a news conference after the team's first practice of the season. 'I have an idea of why, but it's kind of beneath the leader of a country to go that route. It's not what leaders do.'" <http://nyti.ms/2fJvNi>

WAPO'S SALLY JENKINS -- "What President Trump doesn't get about the NFL": "How the NFL responds to Donald Trump's spit-foaming is hardly a test case for whether the republic will stand. Nevertheless, the league is a maker of manners in this country, so it means something that Commissioner Roger Goodell and others are

getting it right, striking the perfect calm but resistant tone in response to Trump's gutter-mouthing, a tone that says, 'We're not your personal WrestleMania, and don't use us for your sham body slams.' The NFL, faced with whether to play to the basest instincts of the audience, declined. It adhered to civility. ...

"The vast majority of the men on the field are not spoiled millionaires abusing their freedoms, as Trump charges. Rather, they have worked as hard as any farmers for their short-lived incomes and are dedicated to using their privilege to make things better for the people they play in front of. Brandon Marshall's Project Borderline foundation combats mental illness. Doug Baldwin is raising money for a family community center in Renton, Wash. And Kaepernick has given away \$1 million to various organizations." <http://wapo.st/2we8aKh>

-- **"UNC national championship team not visiting White House,"** by the News and Observer's Andrew Carter: "North Carolina's 2017 national championship men's basketball team will not visit the White House, a team spokesman said on Saturday, though the Tar Heels were invited to visit, as is the custom for teams that win college men's basketball and football national championships. Whether UNC would visit President Donald Trump's White House, if the Tar Heels won, became a topic of interest during the Final Four." <http://bit.ly/2xCeSwQ>

***** **A message from UC Davis:** To ensure the production of healthy, safe food, you need to know agriculture. And water management. Plant biology. Ecology. Economics. Engineering. Animal science. Human health. Policy. And community development. At UC Davis, the No. 1 agricultural university in the nation, we know a bright future in food requires expertise, research and collaboration across many fields. It's a complex effort, and one we're proud to cultivate with farms, industry and policymakers around the world. Learn more at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

STARTLING ANECDOTE - STAN GREENBERG, "How She Lost" in the American Prospect: "Astonishingly, the 2016 Clinton campaign conducted no state polls in the final three weeks of the general election and relied primarily on data analytics to project turnout and the state vote. They paid little attention to qualitative focus groups or feedback from the field, and their brief daily analytics poll didn't measure which candidate was defining the election or getting people engaged." <http://bit.ly/2fipWF4>

WEST COAST WATCH -- "California Republicans looking for ways to increase their relevance in statewide races," by L.A. Times' Seema Mehta: "In an effort to avoid an embarrassing repeat of the Senate election in 2016, when no GOP candidate appeared on the November ballot, the California Republican Party may change its rules and pick sides in the primary.

"Party leaders hope that creating an endorsement process for statewide candidates would allow GOP voters to unite behind a single person in a multi-candidate primary field, increasing the chances that a Republican wins one of the top two spots in the primary and makes it to the general election." <http://lat.ms/2hrEZNz>

BONUS GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman, filing from New York:

-- **"Snopes and the Search for Facts in a Post-Fact World,"** by Michelle Dean in Wired - per Longreads.com's description: "How the legendary internet fact-finding site snopes.com came to be, and how a messy divorce and ownership and control squabbles have threatened the site's existence." <http://bit.ly/2yiyF1p>

-- **"America Wasn't Built for Humans,"** by Andrew Sullivan in NYMag: "Tribalism was an urge our Founding Fathers assumed we could overcome. And so it has become our greatest vulnerability." <http://nym.ag/2y0afh9>

-- **"These Women Are the Last Thing Standing Between You and Nuclear War,"** by Danielle McNally in Marie Claire: If an order comes, missileers "open a safe located between their workstations secured with two padlocks, one fastened on by each missileer. Inside is a code that the incoming encrypted message must match. But there's an A-side and a B-side and neither missileer knows both. It's all part of Two-Person Control - a system that ensures a rogue missileer can't start World War III on her own." <http://bit.ly/2fFogpH>

--**"An Open Letter to Ta-Nehisi Coates: The Dream is real,"** by Jason D. Hill in Commentary: "I am saddened by your conviction that white people wield such a great deal of metaphysical power over the exercise of your own agency. In making an enemy of the Dream that is a constitutive feature of American identity, you have irrevocably alienated yourself from the redemptive hope, the inclusive unity, and the faith and charity that are necessary for America to move ever closer to achieving moral excellence." <http://bit.ly/2wPHfDS>

--**"That Magic Feeling: A day at Abbey Road Studios,"** by James Rosen in National Review: "There is no happy ending to this story. Not many years from now - five? one? - the world will be reduced to an uninhabitable state in which no Beatles are alive. Nor will this essay meet the dictates of feel-good pop psychology, wherein my visit to Abbey Road Studios in London this summer neatly caps, and thereby helps me to turn the corner on, my Fab obsession." <http://bit.ly/2jRaWmQ>

-- **"A Hospital Crisis Is Killing Rural Communities. This State Is 'Ground Zero,'"** by Lauren Weber and Andy Miller in HuffPost: "Inside three Georgia counties that have struggled to keep their hospitals ??? and futures ??? alive." <http://bit.ly/2hoJuZi>

-- **"The Salvation of Mosul,"** by Joshua Hammer in October's Smithsonian: "An Iraqi archaeologist braved ISIS snipers and booby-trapped ruins to rescue cultural treasures in the city and nearby legendary Nineveh and Nimrud." <http://bit.ly/2wM77QU>

-- **"*Hopeful face*,"** by Andrew Caines in the Times Literary Supplement - per TheBrowser.com's description: "A horrible thought, but what if emoji are the future of writing, as well as its past - a reversion to the pictographic tradition of Egyptian

hieroglyphs, after the relatively brief reign of the printing press and the written word? Already, emojis are a much richer language than hieroglyphics ever were - 2,666 symbols, against roughly a thousand known hieroglyphs. 'Emoji represent how eager we are to influence the emotions of others, and to resolve ambiguity in language.'

<http://bit.ly/2xtGOCY>

-- **"How Do You Like It Now, Gentlemen?"** by Lillian Ross in The New Yorker's May 13, 1950 issue: "Ernest Hemingway, who may well be the greatest living American novelist and short-story writer, rarely comes to New York. He spends most of his time on a farm, the Finca Vigia, nine miles outside Havana, with his wife, a domestic staff of nine, fifty-two cats, sixteen dogs, a couple of hundred pigeons, and three cows."

<http://bit.ly/2xWGq10> (h/t Longform.org)

-- **"Iris van Herpen's Hi-Tech Couture,"** by The New Yorker's Rebecca Mead: "The designer combines 3-D printing and hand stitching to reimagine the possibilities of the human body." <http://bit.ly/2hp7sUb>

-- **"A High-End Mover Dishes on Truckstop Hierarchy, Rich People, and Moby Dick,"** by Finn Murphy, author of "The Long Haul: A Trucker's Tales of Life on the Road," in a Longreads excerpt: "A mover waits longer for coffee, longer in the service bays, longer for showers, longer at the fuel desk, longer everywhere in the world of trucks than the freight hauler. It's because we're unknown. We don't have standard routes, so we can't be relied on for the pie slice and the big tip every Tuesday at ten thirty. We're OK with being outside the fellowship because we know we're at the apex of the pyramid." <http://bit.ly/2xzQpbu> ... **\$18.32 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2jRoHlx>

-- **"If It Keeps on Raining,"** by Micah Fields in Oxford American: In Houston, "water lapped at the floorboards. The Jeep could clear two feet easy, but on a few occasions, we looked in the mirror to watch the boat lift off its trailer and shimmy behind us, then ease back onto its carpeted runners. We entered neighborhoods of homes where floods had already come and gone, where people had started the process of mucking the unsalvageable remnants of their dwellings." <http://bit.ly/2hIhWYI>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Jack Del Rio, coach of the Oakland Raiders, having dinner at District Winery on Saturday night ahead of his team's game on Sunday versus the Redskins.

OUT AND ABOUT -- Three hundred people came out last night to celebrate Jeh Johnson's and wife Susan DiMarco's 60th birthday in a big tent outside the Montclair Art Museum in Montclair, New Jersey, DJ'd by Felix Hernandez. Food served included brisket, paella with crab and shrimp, lobster tacos, Halloumi cheese, and pigs in blanket. There was also a photo booth with cardboard cutouts of Jeh and Susan that guests took pictures with. Everyone also got a parting gift bag with a pocket Constitution and

chocolate truffles. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2xo5Kwr> ... <http://bit.ly/2wPsh0A>

SPOTTED: Jonathan and Emily Alter, Tanya Bradsher, Todd Breasseale, Jonathan Capehart and Nick Schmit, Michael Chertoff, Penny Pritzker, Jack and Susanna Quinn, Charlie and Luiza Savage, Cyrus Vance Jr., Avril Haines, Elizabeth King, Bill Derrough, Chris Fonzone, Marc Morial, Alejandro Mayorkas, Amb. Phil Murphy, Amb. Joe Westphal, Pete Neffenger, Esther Olavarria, Tyler Moran, Roger Parrino, Paul Rosen, Steven Isenberg, Alice Lloyd, Aubrey Sarvis, Patti Steele, Frank Taylor, Mario Flores, Mary Alice Williams, and 10 members of the judiciary.

EMBASSY PARTY CIRCUIT -- Pool report: "The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia hosted its 87th National Day [yesterday], celebrating the anniversary of the country's establishment at the National Building Museum showcasing the Kingdom's rich cultural heritage, ongoing societal developments and long-standing partnership with the U.S. with Ambassador Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud." ***Pic of the new young ambassador by Daniel Swartz*** <http://bit.ly/2weNj9k>

ENGAGED -- BRITTANY BRAMELL -- currently assistant administrator for public affairs at TSA, and an alum of Uber, Boehnerland and Lindsey Graham for president, to **DAN PUNARO**, VP for Enterprise IT. Dan proposed at the Capitol, where they met more than a decade ago. Brittany's parents, four brothers and their families all flew from California to surprise her. ***Pic of the couple*** <http://bit.ly/2hozOS3> (h/t Dan's father Gen. Arnold Punaro)

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- KATIE WALSH, senior data and digital adviser at the RNC, and **MIKE SHIELDS**, partner at Convergence Media, got married Saturday night in Kiawah Island, South Carolina. **SPOTTED:** Reince and Sally Priebus, Johnny and Sarah DeStefano, Rob and Cindy Sims, Renee and Rep. Richard Hudson (R-N.C.), Sean and Emily Cairncross, Brian Walsh, Brad Parscale, Mike Ambrosini and Vanessa Morrone, Cara Mason, Tory McGuire, Sean and Emily Cairncross, Guy Harrison, Chris Hansen, Madeleine Westerhout, Jonathan Day, Muffy Day, Richard Waters. ***Pic of the couple with Reince and Sally Priebus*** <http://bit.ly/2fjMp4T>

-- **Jeff Bechdel**, chief content officer for America Rising, and **Riley Thomlison**, sales and marketing manager at IJR, "exchanged vows in front of family and friends that came from across the United States to celebrate in a ceremony as the sun set over the St. Louis Country Club. As per Pittsburgh tradition, the highlight of the reception was an immaculate table of cookies. The couple first met while working at America Rising, Jeff as communications director and Riley as video director in 2014." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2wMKNVk> ... ***Their first dance*** <http://bit.ly/2hoWLVl>

SPOTTED: Joe Pounder, Byron Koay, Colin Reed, Alex Angel, Bexie Nobles, Luke Marchant, Candace Lee, Emily Bouck, Maggie Dougherty, Tom Brandt, Nick Colella, Jesse and Erin Blumenthal, Richard Sant, Kerry Rom.

-- **Natalie Gillam**, comms. director for Rep. Ryan Costello (R-Pa.), married **Mark**

McLaughlin, research director at Senate Leadership Fund, at Bald Head Island in North Carolina Saturday. Pool report: "They met while working at the NRSC. She is an esteemed graduate of the London School of Economics and alum of America Rising. Within GOP circles Mark is credited for finding Elizabeth Warren's Native American ancestry, John Walsh plagiarizing his thesis and Joe Donnelly outsourcing jobs to Mexico." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2xomFPr> ... <http://bit.ly/2xxDQ00>

SPOTTED: Alleigh Marre, Zack Roday, Zach Gillan, Christina Bolling, Dianna Colasurdo and Jahan Wilcox.

--**"Caroline Rabbitt, Andrew Tabler"** -- **N.Y. Times:** "Mrs. Tabler, 30, is the communications director in Washington for Senator Tom Cotton, an Arkansas Republican. She graduated from Wake Forest University and received a master's degree in communications from Johns Hopkins University. ... Mr. Tabler, 33, is the special assistant to the under secretary of the Navy, and works in the Pentagon. From 2010-2011, he served as an ensign in the Navy, at the Naval Amphibious Base Coronado in San Diego. He graduated from George Washington University." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2xxNq38>

OBAMA ALUMNI -- "Allison Zelman, Max Lesko": "Ms. Zelman, 33, is the director of states for the [DNC] in Washington. She was until 2011 a policy assistant and speechwriter for the Domestic Policy Council at the White House. ... Mr. Lesko, 32, is the director of national organizing, intergovernmental outreach and the Children's Defense Fund Action Council for the Children's Defense Fund in Washington. Until Jan. 20, he was working in the Obama administration as chief of staff at the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Education. ... The couple met in Portland, Ore., in 2008 while working on the Obama presidential campaign." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2xC6fT4> ... **Buffy Wicks' wedding Instapic of the couple** <http://bit.ly/2xrKfYU>

--**SPOTTED:** Jon Carson, Paulette Aniskoff, Melody Barnes, Jeremy Bird, Betsy Hoover, Sharon Block, Dan Kanninen, Chris Wyant, Lauren Kidwell, Amanda Brown, Kyle Lierman, Jenn Brown, Anne Filipic, Carlos Monje, Greg Schultz, John Oxtoby, Emmy Ruiz, Jorge Neri, Shira Miller, Brian Gill, Alex Lofton, Aletheia Henry.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Richard Viguerie (hat tip: Peter Pasi) ... **(was Friday):** Mayer Brown managing partner Ken Geller, who celebrated with dinner with his family last night at Bistro Bis (h/t son Eric Geller)

BIRTHDAYS: Kate Karnes and Lara Barger of the White House (h/ts Lindsay Walters) ... Hope Hall, former Obama WH videographer ... former Defense Secretary Ash Carter is 63 ... Lou Dobbs is 72 ... Michael J. Kennedy ... Politico's Lisa Leonard (h/t Caitlin Conant) ... former Rep. Joseph Kennedy II (D-Mass.) is 65 ... Sharon Yang, government and politics outreach at Facebook ... VICE's Alexandra Jaffe ... Katie Levinson Burke, senior strategist and global chief of staff at Edelman and a Bush WH alum (h/t Matt David) ... Joe Householder, EVP of corporate and crisis at Hill & Knowlton Strategies ... Jessica Schumer ... Suzanne (Tomlin) Mackowiak ... Chris Altchek, Mic CEO and co-

founder ... Will Booher, former Bush 43, Commerce and FEMA ... historian and Reagan scholar Craig Shirley is 61 ... photojournalist Mike Kamber is 54 ... EPA's Patrick Davis ... DC restaurateur Alan Popovsky ... Missy Owens ... Shawn McCoy, publisher of InsideSources and a Romney Iowa alum, is 33. He's celebrating by playing laser-tag and Topgolf (h/t Blake Waggoner) ... Morgan Jackson, chief strategist for NC Gov. Roy Cooper's campaign and partner at Nexus Strategies (h/t Andrew Bates) ... WSJ's Katy Stech ... CAP's Phil Wolgin ...

... **Will Allison**, comms director for Jeff Flake for Senate and "not only the pride of Oklahoma but a perfect gentleman and best knife fighter on the Senate map in my book" (h/t Brian Reisinger) ... Kelsey Coates, former senior associate research director in the Obama WH, is 28 (h/t Dan Cronin) ... Mike Morey, SVP at SKDKnickerbocker ... Derek Pangallo ... Stan Kahn ... Joe DeSantis ... Sara Dubois ... Katherine McLane, senior advisor at LEVICK ... Will Nuckols ... Ken Suggs of Janet, Jenner & Suggs (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Taryn Houghton Rosenkranz ... Hilary Kelly ... Ericka Andersen ... Jason Putorti ... Page Austin ... Kim Fuller ... Tim Reynolds ... Moe Tkacik ... Daniel Buk ... James Reppert ... Andrew Cecchinato ... Anthony Knopps ... Pete Carr ... Stevens C. Berry ... Judah Groveman ... Lincoln Saunders ... Greg Knott ... Katrina Mendiola ... Sam Parker ... Tony Anthony ... Jon Davidson ... Michael Teter ... Dave Contarino (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from UC Davis:** To ensure the production of healthy, safe food, you need to know agriculture. And water management. Plant biology. Ecology. Economics. Engineering. Animal science. Human health. Policy. And community development. At UC Davis, the No. 1 agricultural university in the nation, we know a bright future in food requires expertise, research and collaboration across many fields. It's a complex effort, and one we're proud to cultivate with farms, industry and policymakers around the world. Learn more at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Skolnik, Samuel
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 8:08:43 PM
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Jahan, two more follow-up questions:

- Was this considered a “full and open” acquisition, or a “simplified” acquisition?

- If it was full and open, the agency may have needed to file a “justification and approval” document – but I can’t find it on usaspending.gov, or fpds.gov, or anywhere else. Can EPA release that document?

Thanks,

Sam Skolnik

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:10 PM
To: Skolnik, Samuel <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

It's also not accurate to call it a no-bid contract. Below is our statement about that as well:

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:09 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:08 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“The Definers contract is for news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:08 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on

Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:07 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Skolnik, Samuel [<mailto:sskolnik@bgov.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:42 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Hi Jahan –

I just sent the following email to press@epa.gov, but wanted to make sure I got some kind of response today. My questions are regarding Definers Corp.

Any help appreciated,

Sam

--

Hi all. I cover federal contracting and procurement issues for Bloomberg Government, and am working on a daily story based off of reports that EPA today has dropped the contract with Definers Corp. to help the EPA shape press coverage of the agency, through a no-bid contract.

Questions:

1 – Why did EPA drop the Definers contract?

2 – Why was this a sole-source solicitation in the first place?

3 – How did EPA decide to solicit the work from Definers Corp. specifically?

4 – What did EPA need to do to justify this as a sole-source solicitation? Did the agency do what it needed to, to abide the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other pertinent laws? What exactly was that?

5 – Does EPA believe there are inherent risks to agencies, and by extension taxpayers, in no-bid contracts? If so, what are they?

I'm looking for comment (or EPA's written thoughts, attributable to Jahan Wilcox or whoever the right person might be) by 4 p.m. today. My contact info is below.

Thank you,

Sam

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

Direct: (202) 416-3328

Cell: (702) 755-5729 *(On Fridays, please call my Cell)*

sskolnik@bgov.com

@samskolnik

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Fri 12/1/2017 4:15:06 PM
Subject: Re:

Fine, but how about an interview with him? I know you think I am writing a hit piece, but I am not. I wouldn't need an interview for that. I wouldn't have spoken to people in Oklahoma who say he is the best person they've ever worked for.

On Fri, Dec 1, 2017 at 8:13 AM Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

One more response you can use about your office ?

"Rather than getting in the weeds about process, Administrator Pruitt is meeting with top career staff at the lead inundated East Chicago Superfund site, Gold King Mine, San Jacinto Waste Pits and other polluted sites because this EPA is about achieving results." EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 17, 2017, at 10:15 AM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Enjoyed the Administrator's interview with the Washington Post. Could we set something similar up for Newsweek?

On Thu, Nov 16, 2017 at 3:28 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We sent you an on-the-record statement in October and we will send you this on-the-record statement as well.

On-The-Record Statement ... "Administrator Pruitt has met with staff from every region and took the unprecedented step of meeting with EPA's criminal investigators – a department that Obama slashed by 24 percent – about how we can work together to protect the environment and American jobs." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On-The-Record Statement ... "We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ (Politico Pro, 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” (Seattle Times, 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. “Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” (NTK Network, Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Have a good day Alexander and we look forward to reading your story.

Best,

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Alexander Nazaryan [mailto:a.nazaryan@newsweek.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:08 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject:

Hi Jahan, I just want to make sure my requests are being taken seriously. That wasn't the impression I got when we spoke today.

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer
Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Shift
Sent: Fri 5/5/2017 2:06:51 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Shift: Job growth rebounded in April — Acosta goes to the White House — Kelly v. Casey

By Ian Kullgren | 05/05/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Marianne LeVine, Ted Hesson and Mel Leonor

ECONOMY CREATED 211,000 JOBS IN APRIL: Job growth surged in April to 211,000, the Labor Department reported today, after falling even lower than previously thought in March.

The report is good news for President Donald Trump. In April, Trump told CEOs that his administration had created "over 600,000 jobs already." In fact, the economy added only 311,000 jobs in February and March, the first full months of his presidency; in today's report, the Labor Department revised its March estimate down to 79,000 jobs. But the April rebound appear to confirm that March's disappointing jobs numbers were due to weather and were not a sign of a slow down in the labor market.

The new job-growth numbers still don't bring Trump's total to the 600,000 jobs he boasted of creating, but April's rebound brings him much closer to that goal. Combined with the House's passage Thursday of legislation to repeal Obamacare, the jobs surge, if it lasts, could add momentum to Trump's other policy priorities, like tax reform.

Unemployment was 4.4 percent, down from March's 4.5 percent. Average hourly private-sector earnings were up 2.5 percent over the previous year. In March, they were up 2.6 percent over the previous year. April's jobs numbers increase the likelihood that the Federal Reserve will hike interest rates in June, despite last week's weak GDP report. The Commerce Department reported Gross Domestic Product increased a mere 0.7 percent during the first quarter of 2017- down from the fourth quarter of 2016's 2.1 percent, the third quarter's 3.5 percent, and the second quarter's 1.4 percent. More here.

BUENOS DÍAS. It's Friday, Cinco de Mayo. This is Morning Shift, POLITICO's daily tipsheet on employment and immigration policy. Send tips, exclusives, and suggestions to thesson@politico.com, mlevine@politico.com, mleonor@politico.com, ikullgren@politico.com and tnoah@politico.com. Follow us on Twitter at [@tedhesson](https://twitter.com/tedhesson), [@marianne_levine](https://twitter.com/marianne_levine), [@MelLeonor](https://twitter.com/MelLeonor), [@IanKullgren](https://twitter.com/IanKullgren) and [@TimothyNoah1](https://twitter.com/TimothyNoah1).

GUIDE TO FEDERAL BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS: The federal budget process is complicated; brush up on your knowledge so you're ready to act as the budget winds its way through Congress. [Download your guide](#).

ACOSTA GOES TO THE WHITE HOUSE: Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta joined Vice President Mike Pence at the White House Thursday for a roundtable with Hispanic leaders (Acosta is the son of Cuban immigrants). According a [photo posted on Twitter](#), guests included a former candidate for the Nevada State Assembly and a 2016 RNC delegate. The meeting came

just before Pence presided over a Cinco de Mayo celebration.

KELLY V. CASEY: "Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly shot back at Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa.) over the case of a 25-year-old mother and 5-year-old son who were deported to Honduras Wednesday despite the senator's passionate and public Twitter appeals to the Trump administration," POLITICO's Ted Hesson reports.

"**Casey tweeted** about the woman's deportation while it was in progress, imploring the administration to halt it and excoriating President Donald Trump for the action, given that the family's life was, he said, threatened after the woman witnessed her cousin's murder," writes Hesson. In one of his tweets, Casey wrote: "The gang who threatened the life of this child and mother won't waste time in seeking to mete out their revenge."

Kelly found himself at an appropriate venue on Thursday morning: a discussion at the Atlantic Council on Central American economic growth and security. When asked by POLITICO about the deportation, he said he'd phoned Casey's office multiple times to discuss cases of families in detention, but had never heard back from the senator. "I say it over and over again: If the laws are not good laws, then change them," Kelly said. "Don't call me, or Twitter or tweet, or go to the press with outrageous stories about how we do business or why we're deporting somebody."

"**Jacklin Rhoads**, a spokeswoman for Casey, said Kelly's version of the facts was 'more than a little full of it ... Our office gave Secretary Kelly's team a direct office line, a cell and email where Senator Casey could be reached quickly,' she said via email. 'While this family was in crisis yesterday, Secretary Kelly did not call.'" Read more.

The DHS secretary's speech at the Atlantic Council event, dubbed "A New Strategy For U.S. Engagement in Central America," elaborated how he would like to approach hemispheric immigration. Kelly painted a bleak portrait of life in the U.S. for Central American migrants and said that, ultimately, they would be better off in their home countries. "These are good people, as a group," Kelly said. "But because of a lot of different reasons, the young men are oftentimes, in relatively large numbers, drawn into crime. Not all of them, but some of them. MS-13 is full of people that come here from that part of the world."

"**An awful lot** of the young women get taken into the other kinds of trades, sex trades, that kind of thing," Kelly continued. "Not all of them, but many of them. Those that don't go in those directions, don't get recruited into that, work under the table ... They work for slave labor, slave wages, under the table. They're victimized."

ST. LOUIS MIN WAGE HIKE TAKES EFFECT TODAY: "St. Louis' embattled minimum wage hike will take effect Friday following a two-year legal fight over the city's effort to require employees to pay workers at least \$10 an hour," Jim Salter reports for The Associated Press. "A circuit court judge lifted an injunction on Thursday that had blocked a 2015 ordinance from becoming law. The city's minimum wage will rise again in January, to \$11 per hour, significantly higher than Missouri's \$7.70 minimum. The increase is expected to give an immediate raise to roughly 35,000 workers." More here.

BUSINESS GROUPS PETITION DOL TO REVIEW SILICA AND BERYLLIUM

RULES: Business groups sent petitions this week asking the Labor Department to review Obama administration regulations that drastically reduce workers' allowable exposure to [silica](#) and [beryllium](#), sources tell Morning Shift. Under President Donald Trump, the Labor Department already delayed the rules' effective dates. The beryllium petition, obtained by POLITICO, requested that the department delay by six months the rule's effective date, [now May 20](#), and reopen the rulemaking record. "Petitioners respectfully submit that there is good cause to forego notice and comment and make the changes effective immediately," the petitioners wrote. The petition was signed by Airborn, Inc., Associated Builders and Contractors, Century Aluminum Company, Edison Electric Institute, Hasco Corporation, Marine Specialty Painting, Inc., Mason Contractors Association of America, Materion Brush, Inc., Mobile Abrasives Inc., the National Association of Home Builders of the United States, and the National Association of Manufacturers. Read it [here](#).

OSHA is already reviewing part of the beryllium rule. Last week, OSHA sent the White House Office of Management and Budget a proposed revision to the regulation that is expected to limit its application to the construction and maritime industries.

ALPHABET'S SCHMIDT BASHES H-1B LIMITS: Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Google's parent company Alphabet, is a huge fan of H-1B visas for specialized workers - so much so that he thinks there shouldn't be a limit. "The stupidest policy in the entire American political system was the limit on H-1B visas," Schmidt said Wednesday, according to CNBC's Chantel McGee. "We want the best people in the world, regardless of any form of sex, race, country, what-have-you. We want them to work for us and not our competitors."

The visa program program is currently capped at 85,000 visas per year, with 20,000 of those going to people with master's degrees or higher. When he signed his "buy American, hire American," executive order in April, President Trump vowed to crack down on instances of the program being used to replace U.S. workers and to initiate the visa's "long-overdue reform." More from CNBC [here](#).

NEW WOES AT FOX: "New troubles for Fox News arose on Thursday as a lawsuit accused it of gender discrimination and one of the women who have accused Bill O'Reilly of sexual harassment said she would appear before the British regulatory group that is assessing 21st Century Fox's attempted takeover of Sky, the satellite TV giant," Emily Steel and Niraj Chokshi report for The New York Times. Read it [here](#).

LAWSUIT ALLEGES WELLS FARGO EMPLOYEES TARGETED UNDOCUMENTED

IMMIGRANTS: Wells Fargo employees targeted undocumented immigrants to open bank accounts, according to former employees' statements obtained in a shareholder lawsuit against the bank, Kristine Phillips reports in the Washington Post. The employees targeted undocumented immigrants in an effort to meet Wells Fargo's daily sales quota. "The alarming statements are the latest in a massive scandal that continues to engulf the San Francisco-based banking giant," Phillips writes. "In September, Wells Fargo was forced to pay \$185 million in regulatory penalties following revelations that more than 2 million bank and credit card accounts were opened on behalf of customers without their knowledge." More [here](#).

'NO ASYLUM HERE': Attorneys for people seeking asylum say that border patrol agents are turning more and more people away without so much as an interview - a violation of U.S. law, which allows those seeking asylum to enter the country and plead their case, Caitlin Dickerson and Miriam Jordan write in the New York Times. "Customs agents have increasingly turned away asylum seekers without so much as an interview, according to migrants and their lawyers, in a trend first noted several months ago and that appeared to accelerate after President Trump's inauguration," Dickerson and Jordan write. "That has left an untold number of migrants trapped in Mexico, where they have sometimes fallen prey to kidnappers seeking ransom or been driven into the hands of drug cartels and smugglers."

There is no hard data on how many people have been turned away, the Times notes. Human Rights First says it knows of at least 125 people who were turned away from November to April. More on that [here](#). Morning Shift obtained a copy of the report Wednesday; you can read that [here](#).

CRIKEY: GoFundMe froze the account of a woman who said her Australian boyfriend had been detained by U.S. Customs, The New York Times reports. The reason? She said he must exit and re-enter the country once every six months to keep the visa valid. But immigration experts say no visa like that exists. More [here](#).

COLUMBIA, NINE MONTHS LATER: The NLRB's August 2016 [Columbia decision](#) prompted graduate students at private universities to organize across the country, but election victories have been few and far in between. Many organizing campaigns that made it to an election remain inconclusive, bogged down by appeals from college administrators, Inside Higher Ed's Colleen Flaherty reports. "Some union advocates have accused institutions of killing time until the Trump administration appoints new - presumably anti-union - members to empty seats on the NLRB. But administrators and their allies say they're carefully exercising their legal rights - including those to appeals - as part of a process with major implications for higher education," Flaherty writes. More [here](#).

George Washington University resident assistants canceled an election planned for this week. The decision came one week after the NLRB ruled that RAs at private institutions could organize. SEIU Local 500's director of higher education made the decision to delay, saying that the union had only five days to prepare, and that it was an exams week. More from [DCist](#).

Meanwhile, in Cambridge, Mass., "Harvard filed an appeal with the National Labor Relations Board Wednesday to contest a ruling that recommended the university conduct an additional student unionization election," the Harvard Crimson reports. "In its appeal, lawyers representing Harvard argue that the NLRB should 'reject the findings and recommendation of an NLRB Hearing Officer and accept the outcome of the November 2016 election,' according to Faculty of Arts and Sciences spokesperson Anna Cowenhoven. 'The University believes that these facts do not warrant a new election,' she wrote in an emailed statement." More [here](#).

APPLE TO PAY \$1B FOR ADVANCE MANUFACTURING JOBS: "Apple says that it intends to bolster the U.S. manufacturing sector by creating a \$1 billion 'advanced manufacturing

fund' - with some of that initial money going toward a company the tech giant is prepared to partner with," the Washington Post reports. "The announcement, which Cook made Wednesday on CNBC, comes after months of focus by President Trump on jobs, manufacturing and the global economy ... Apple's announcement was not a hiring promise; the company simply said that it was hoping to promote U.S. manufacturing with its new fund." More [here](#).

Another take: "Apple's \$1 Billion Manufacturing Boost Will Likely Bring Robots, Not Factory Jobs," from the [MIT Technology Review](#).

COFFEE BREAK

- "Survey: Just 5 percent of economists believe Trump's big tax promise," from [The Washington Post](#)
- "Gig Workers Need Updated Wage and Hour Law, House Panel Chair Says," from [Bloomberg BNA](#)
- "Texas governor poised to sign nation's harshest anti-sanctuary bill," from [The Washington Post](#)
- "State reverses unemployment fraud determinations in thousands of cases," from [MLive.com](#)
- "Supreme Court says workers fired for inadvertent errors cannot be denied unemployment compensation," from the [Wisconsin State Journal](#)
- "Trump's immigration crackdown is driving tech jobs into Mexico's arms," from [Vanity Fair](#)
- "OSHA cites Big Ox Energy with 6 serious violations," from the [Sioux City Journal](#)

THAT'S ALL FOR MORNING SHIFT.

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-shift/2017/05/job-growth-rebounded-in-april-220159>

To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings/settings>

This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: EPA Press Office
Sent: Wed 1/3/2018 7:35:03 PM
Subject: Holly Greaves Nominated as Chief Financial Officer of EPA

Today, President Donald J. Trump announced his intention to nominate Holly Greaves

Holly Greaves Nominated as Chief Financial Officer of EPA

WASHINGTON (January 3, 2018) – Today, President Donald J. Trump announced his intention to nominate Holly Greaves as chief financial officer for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Ms. Greaves currently serves as the senior advisor for budget and audit where she provides financial and budgetary counsel to the Agency and Administrator Pruitt. She is a former senior manager at the public accounting firm KPMG LLP, where she provided auditing and advisory services to cabinet-level Federal agencies. Ms. Greaves has extensive knowledge of Federal financial and IT environments, Federal accounting standards, and the laws and regulations applicable to financial management and operations.

“Holly is exceptionally qualified to be our chief financial officer and has been an integral advisor to the Agency as we look to enact meaningful fiscal reforms and eliminate wasteful spending,” **said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt**. “I look forward to working with Holly in her new leadership role at EPA.”

Her nomination is receiving high accolades:

Donna Mclean, former assistant secretary for Budget and Programs, U.S. Department of Transportation and former chair of Amtrak: “A Chief Financial Officer requires a strong foundation in accounting, budgeting, and financial management. Given her extensive experience working on financial statement audits of large, Federal government agencies, Holly Greaves is uniquely qualified for the role of EPA Chief Financial Officer, and she will certainly be an asset to the Agency as they work to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the way they do business.”

Rick Puckett, former executive vice president and chief financial officer, Snyder’s-Lance, Inc., and member of the Department of Interior Beachhead team for President Trump: “Holly Greaves is an outstanding choice for Chief Financial Officer of the Environmental Protection Agency. Her prior experience as an external auditor, within a Big 4 firm, for large Federal government entities makes her well-suited to respond to the complexities of Federal agencies and their financial management organizations. Holly’s professionalism, knowledge of the Federal Government and acumen within professional accounting will be a tremendous asset to the EPA leadership team.”

Andrew Lewis, adjunct professor, The George Washington University School of Business: “Ms. Greaves has deep knowledge of federal budget and accounting rules, and was able to convey that knowledge in a meaningful and practical way to our students. She has a passion for mentoring and developing people, which will serve her well as the EPA’s Chief Financial Officer.”

Jill Homan, Republican National Committeewoman for Washington, DC and Republican National Committee Executive Committee member: “I met Holly Greaves six years ago through her involvement with the District of Columbia Republican Party. She is an extremely thoughtful and

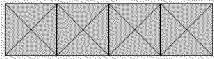
energetic leader who takes the time to listen to disparate viewpoints in an effort to build consensus. I fully expect her to bring these qualities with her should she be confirmed to the role of Chief Financial Officer.”

Elizabeth Schurgin, executive director of the DC Youth Orchestra Program (DCYOP): “I worked with Holly Greaves for several years through her involvement with the DCYOP, a nonprofit that provides group lessons and ensemble opportunities for youth ages 4-18. As a member of our Board’s finance committee, she made many valuable contributions to our organization, from assisting in the selection of a new auditor to reviewing financial statements and other annual reports. Her practical experience and commonsense approach to financial management will be a valuable asset to the EPA.”

Jennifer Anderson, former chief financial officer of LetterLogic, Inc.: “Holly is a valued colleague and hands down a top-notch accountant. Her experience serving a range of public and private sector clients paired with her ingenuity make her extremely well poised to lead the finance function of the EPA efficiently and effectively. I look forward to her service at this important agency.”

Chad Call, director of corporate finance at Intermarine, LLC: “I hold the utmost respect for Holly Greaves and applaud her nomination to the role of Chief Financial Officer for the EPA. Holly is a dedicated professional and a person of genuine integrity. She is intelligent, pragmatic, and gives due attention to detail. I have known Holly as a personal friend (and former colleague) for over 10 years, and I can say that her leadership capacity is well-suited for this role.”

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Washington, D.C. 20004

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To: jjacoby@leftright.tv[jjacoby@leftright.tv]; anya.bourg2@gmail.com[anya.bourg2@gmail.com]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 10/4/2017 9:55:31 PM
Subject: FW: FRONTLINE (PBS) interview request for Scott Pruitt

1) They have characterized the Administrator and his staff as inhospitable to their input and the facts of the case, secretive, and careful to avoid creating a public record. What is your response?

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ (Politico Pro, 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” (Seattle Times, 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. “Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” (NTK Network, Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

2) Specifically, we have been told that first press release announcing the review of the effluent limitations guidelines (See link, <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-reconsider-elg-rule>) contained erroneous information: citing the 1.2 billion as the highest cost which could be spent to comply with the rule in a few years invalidates the 480 million average annual cost which assumes costs are spread out over a number of years. If you cite a maximum cost over a few years, then you need to cite a much lower average annual cost than 480M.

On-The-Record Statement: “The \$1.2 B came straight from EPAs RIA. It was the upper estimate of the rules compliance costs for the first five years.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

3) We were also told that attempts to correct the record on the effluent limitations guideline press release by EPA staff went unanswered, and then afterwards Administrator Pruitt did not heed the recommendations of his senior staff on this topic.

On-The-Record Statement ... “This is a false characterization.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2017 6:44 PM

To: James Jacoby <jjacoby@leftright.tv>

Cc: Anya Bourg <anya.bourg2@gmail.com>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>

Subject: Re: FRONTLINE (PBS) interview request for Scott Pruitt

Will work on these and get back to you tomorrow.

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 2, 2017, at 4:52 PM, James Jacoby <jjacoby@leftright.tv> wrote:

Hello Jahan,

We are in the process of finishing our film for FRONTLINE that is scheduled to air on October 11th. As you know from our prior communication, the film traces the political rise of Administrator Pruitt along with the movement, in which he participated, that challenged the former administration's approach. And as you know, over the past few months, we have repeatedly requested an interview with Mr. Pruitt.

We are now seeking your comment on claims in published reports and in our film, from former EPA staffers.

1) They have characterized the Administrator and his staff as inhospitable to their input and the facts of the case, secretive, and careful to avoid creating a public record. What is your response?

2) Specifically, we have been told that first press release announcing the review of the effluent limitations guidelines (See link, <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-reconsider-elg-rule>) contained erroneous information: citing the 1.2 billion as the highest cost which could be spent to comply with the rule in a few years invalidates the 480 million average annual cost which assumes costs are spread out over a number of years. If you cite a maximum cost over a few years, then you need to cite a much lower average annual cost than 480M.

3) We were also told that attempts to correct the record on the effluent limitations guideline press release by EPA staff went unanswered, and then afterwards Administrator Pruitt did not heed the recommendations of his senior staff on this topic.

We would greatly appreciate a timely response to this request because we are locking our film this week, if possible by end of day Wednesday, October 4th.

Thank you,

James Jacoby and Anya Bourg

On Tue, Sep 5, 2017 at 1:25 PM, JACOBY James <james.jacoby@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Jahan,

Can we talk?

Thanks,

James

On Tue, Aug 29, 2017 at 11:49 AM, JACOBY James <james.jacoby@gmail.com> wrote:

Jahan,

Just following up yet again. I'd never heard back from you.

Thanks,

James

On Thu, Jul 13, 2017 at 12:46 PM, <james.jacoby@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Jahan,

Hope all's well. Following up.

Thanks,

James

On Jun 30, 2017, at 9:22 AM, James Jacoby <jjacoby@leftright.tv> wrote:

Hi Jahan,

Just following up.

Any word?

Thanks,

James

On Jun 26, 2017, at 10:19 AM, James Jacoby <jjacoby@leftright.tv> wrote:

Go

On Jun 21, 2017, at 12:46 PM, James Jacoby <jjacoby@leftright.tv> wrote:

Hi Jahan,

Hope the meeting went well yesterday afternoon; I'm

available anytime to field questions or concerns. Please let me know how best to follow up.

Best,

James

On Jun 20, 2017, at 2:27 PM, James Jacoby
<jjacoby@leftright.tv> wrote:

Jahan

Sent you the email below. I just wanted to reiterate something: the bottom line is we want to understand where the Administrator is coming from and where he wants to bring the agency. Frontline is the best possible venue to get into depth and nuance as opposed to soundbites. As we discussed, there's a prevailing narrative out there about the Administrator; if there's more to the story, we're seeking to understand it.

Many thanks,

James

On Jun 20, 2017, at 2:11 PM, James Jacoby
<jjacoby@leftright.tv> wrote:

Great talking to you Jahan. Thanks for the call.
You can reach me anytime at [917.484.0340](tel:917.484.0340).

Here's the link to the 60 Minutes piece I produced

featuring then-Senator Tom Coburn:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/disability-usa/>

And here is the original letter I sent requesting the interview with the Administrator:

Dear
J.P.,

I am a
producer
with
FRONTLINE,
the
flagship
public
affairs
series
on
PBS.

I am
reaching
out to
discuss
the
prospect
of
interviewing
Scott
Pruitt
for an
hour-
long
program
we are
producing
that
will

take a
balanced
look at
the
effort
to
unwind
Obama-
era
energy
and
environmental
policies;
the
program
will
also
seek
to
explain
why
the
Environmental
Protection
Agency
had
become
the
subject
of
criticism
through-
out
the
country.

We
are
seeking
to put
the
debate
about
environmental
regulations
into a

larger
economic
and
political
context
for our
viewers.
We
will do
so by
including
a wide
range
of
perspectives
on the
real-
world
cost of
environmental
regulations
and
their
impact
on
industry.
The
documentary
will air
in
October/November.

The
purpose
of this
program
is to
create
something
comprehensive
and
informative.
As
you
may
know,
Frontline

is
respected
for its
depth,
fairness,
and
commitment
to
nuanced
story-
telling.

We
think it
is vital
that
our
viewers
hear
from
Mr.
Pruitt.
He
can
help
our
viewers
understand
why,
as he
puts it,
"people
look at
the
EPA
the
way
they
look at
the
IRS."

This
documentary
will
trace
the
recent
history

of
grievances
with
the
EPA
including
Mr.
Pruitt's
efforts
as
Oklahoma
AG to
argue
for the
rule of
law
against
EPA
regulations
fourteen
times.
We
would
also
like to
interview
Mr.
Pruitt
about
his
goals
in his
new
role as
EPA
Administrator,
particularly
his
efforts
to roll
back
Obama-
era
policies
to get
the
EPA

"back
to
basics."

We
are
planning
to
spend
some
time
filming
in
Washington
DC,
and
we
would
also
like to
spend
time in
Oklahoma
and
elsewhere
in the
heartland
where
one
can
clearly
see
the
transformative
economic
impact
of the
energy
industry.
I've
heard
from
friends
and
colleagues
in
Oklahoma

City
that
the
city
has
blossomed
as a
result
of the
shale
revolution -
a
revolution
that is,
without
a
doubt,
one of
the
most
important
economic
developments
in this
country's
recent
history.

If
possible,
we
would
like to
arrange
an on-
camera
interview
with
Mr.
Pruitt.
We
are
also
interested
in
following
him on

any
upcoming
media
events
on his
Back
to
Basics
tour.
We
can
discuss
that
further,
but
our
primary
objective
is to
sit
down
with
Mr.
Pruitt
to
understand
his
views
on
federalism
as
they
relate
to
environmental
regulation
and
how
he
plans
to
balance
economic
expansion
with
environmental
concerns.

If it
would
be
helpful,
my
colleagues
and I
would
be
happy
to
meet
with
you in
person
to
discuss
this
request.
I'm
available
any
time
by
phone
to
address
any
questions
or
concerns.
My
cell
is 917.484.0340

I look
forward
to
hearing
from
you.

Many
thanks,

James
Jacoby

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Thur 6/8/2017 6:05:34 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Lewandowski's former partner signs Lebanese bank — Cornerstone hires former Price aide — Longtime lobbyists in White House lack ethics waivers

By Theodoric Meyer | 06/08/2017 02:02 PM EDT

With David Beavers, Aubree Eliza Weaver and Daniel Lippman

LEWANDOWSKI'S FORMER PARTNER SIGNS LEBANESE BANK: **Avenue Strategies Global, LLC**, a sister firm of **Avenue Strategies**, the lobbying firm started by **Corey Lewandowski** and **Barry Bennett** after the election, has signed its first client. Bennett will lobby for the **Bank of Beirut**, working improving the understanding of "banking in Lebanon," according to a disclosure filing. The bank is the first client Bennett has signed since Lewandowski quit the firm last month.

CORNERSTONE ADDS FORMER PRICE AIDE: **Jeff Hamling**, a former deputy chief of staff to then-Rep. **Tom Price** (R-Ga.), who's now Health and Human Services secretary, is joining **Cornerstone Government Affairs**. He'll be a senior vice president based in the firm's Atlanta and Washington offices, lobbying at the state and federal levels. Hamling was previously a lobbyist for **Dentons** based in Atlanta and before that worked for the **Georgia Chamber of Commerce** as vice president for state and federal affairs.

LONGTIME LOBBYISTS IN WHITE HOUSE LACK ETHICS WAIVERS: "At least a half-dozen former lobbyists are working in President **Donald Trump**'s White House even though they haven't received waivers from the administration's ethics rules, raising questions about how much the rules do to prevent conflicts of interest," **POLITICO's Theodoric Meyer** reports. "The ethics pledge Trump implemented in January, which he touted as part of his campaign-trail pledge to 'drain the swamp' of Washington, bars administration officials from working on any issues they lobbied on during the past two years."

- "The Trump administration has granted exemptions from the rules for a handful of staffers, as President Barack Obama's administration did. But at least six former lobbyists now working in the White House haven't received such waivers, meaning they must recuse themselves internally from any issue where they have conflicts, according to the White House. ... 'I have been concerned by the number of White House staff who have already received ethics waivers this year,' Sen. **Al Franken** (D-Minn.), who voted against a former lobbyist Trump nominated to the No. 2 post at the Interior Department this week, said in a statement. 'But what may be even more troubling is that several veteran lobbyists are working as key advisors in the White House without waivers, which invites the question: Does President Trump, who pledged to 'drain the swamp' during his campaign, take ethics rules seriously?'" Full story.

- The number of ex-lobbyists working without waivers could well be much higher. "At least 88 former lobbyists have been appointed or nominated to join the administration, including 56 who previously lobbied the agencies that hired them, according to a tally by the liberal group **American Bridge**," **The Washington Post's Matea Gold** and **Juliet Eilperin** report. Under

Obama's ethics rules, lobbyists were banned from joining agencies they had lobbied in the previous two years.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Got a tip? **Get in touch:** tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow me on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

THE INNOVATION ISSUE: How should Washington think about innovation? What's its role in the economy - and what does it take for government to foster new technologies that help the whole nation, not just a favored few? In a month long Special Report, **The Agenda** takes a deep look at the surprising new politics of innovation, and ideas for how to drive it in a new era. In this package, you'll read about how AOL founder Steve Case became the first call for Congresspeople who want to bring innovation to the heartland; a critical look at Challenge.gov, the federal government's prize competition designed to spur innovation; and the surprisingly innovative history of the U.S. Post Office, which was long on the forefront of technology before turning into a lesson in what **not** to do. Read the entire package [here](#).

SPG PROMOTES FORMER TRUMP CAMPAIGN STAFFER: SPG has promoted **Jacob Daniels** to senior vice president of policy. Daniels, a former **Donald Trump** campaign staffer in Michigan, joined SPG as it staffed up after the election as vice president of policy. (Daniels also recently married **Stacey Kafka**, who's press secretary in Rep. **Blake Farenthold's** office.) The firm has signed several foreign governments since the election, including Kenya, Czechia and New Zealand, and is also launching **SPG Studios**, an in-house creative firm that will handle marketing and communications work for foreign and domestic clients.

WHITE-COLLAR LAWYERS SEE OPPORTUNITY IN TRUMP SCANDALS: "The Russia investigations are bad news for President **Donald Trump**, but they're a blessing for white-collar lawyers and crisis consultants whose careers are primed to take off as the criminal probes unfold," **POLITICO's Darren Samuelsohn** and **Andrew Restuccia** report. "More than a dozen attorneys and crisis communications specialists have already started working for Trump associates touched by the unfolding Russia scandal, according to a POLITICO tally. People close to the probes say that number is only expected to grow as more than 20 other senior campaign aides and White House officials begin receiving subpoenas, grand jury summons and other requests from special counsel **Robert Mueller** as well as congressional committees." [Full story](#).

NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION SIGNS INVARIANT: The **National Restaurant Association** has hired **Invariant** (formerly known as Heather Podesta + Partners) to lobby on a variety of issues, including menu-labeling requirements, labor issues and health care reform. The trade association also retains **Capitol Legislative Strategies**, **Prime Policy Group** and **Urban Swirski & Associates**.

FORMER AIR FORCE SECRETARY JOINS BAIN & COMPANY'S WASHINGTON OFFICE: "Former Air Force Secretary **Deborah Lee James** has joined the consulting firm **Bain & Company**, the firm [announced](#) today," **POLITICO's Connor O'Brien** reports. "James, who was the Air Force's top civilian leader from 2013 to 2017, is a special adviser in Bain's Washington office, effective June 1. The firm said she 'will advise aerospace, defense and

government services clients. She will also work closely with Bain's local leadership to cultivate relationships with high-potential individuals and companies in these and other industries in the region." [Full story.](#)

HOUSE AND SENATE DEMOCRATS PLAN TO SUE TRUMP: "Dozens of House and Senate Democrats plan to sue President **Donald Trump** in the coming weeks, claiming he is breaking the law by refusing to relinquish ownership of his sprawling real-estate empire while it continues to profit from business with foreign governments," **POLITICO's Heather Caygle** reports. "The lawsuit follows months of threats from Democratic lawmakers that Trump, by refusing to sell off his companies or place them in a blind trust, is in ongoing violation of the Constitution's emoluments clause - which prohibits the president from accepting gifts or payments from foreign governments - and might face consequences." [Full story.](#)

JOBS REPORT:

- The **International Safety Equipment Association** has named **Charles Johnson** as its new president. He'll start Aug. 1, replacing **Daniel Shipp**, who is retiring. Johnson was previously vice president of policy at the **Aluminum Association**.

- The **U.S. Chamber of Commerce's** board of directors has elected **Thomas Wilson** of **Allstate** as chairman and **James Stephenson** of **Yancey Bros.** as vice chairman. Wilson was previously vice chairman.

- The **American Petroleum Institute** has tapped **Megan Barnett Bloomgren** as vice president for communications. She was previously acting deputy chief of staff at the Interior Department. Before that, she worked as a sherpa for Interior Secretary-designee **Ryan Zinke** during his confirmation hearings and was a partner at **DCI Group**. **Linda Rozett**, the previous vice president for communications, is retiring.

- Former House Speaker **John Boehner** has joined **Arizona Mining Inc.**'s board of directors.

- **Amy Pellegrino** recently started as health policy director for Chairwoman [Susan Collins](#) on the Senate Special Committee on Aging Committee. She was previously a principal at the **Podesta Group** and is an alumna of the office of former Sen. **Olympia Snowe** (R-Maine).

- **Claire Bennett** has left the **Glover Park Group**, where she was a senior associate, and will start next week as a consultant at **Gagen MacDonald**, a consulting firm headquartered in Chicago.

SPOTTED: At **Romeo & Juliet** on Capitol Hill last night to toast **Kevin Cummins** on his move from Sen. [Tom Udall](#)'s office to the **Professional Services Council**, according to a PI tipster: **Frannie Wellings** of **Google**; **Joe Trahern** of **Comcast**; **Kara Van Stralen** of Sen. [Maggie Hassan](#)'s office; **Scarlet Doyle** of Sen. [Dean Heller](#)'s office; **David Grossman** of the **Federal Communications Commission**; **Michelle Ash** of the House Energy and Commerce Committee; **Tom Manatos** of **Spotify**; **Melika Carroll** of Sen. [Brian Schatz](#)'s office; **Sunmin Kim** of **TechCongress**; **Lee Friedman** of **NCTA**; **Dana Gray** of **Sprint**; **Harry Anastopulos** of the

Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee; **Cort Bush** of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee; and **Joey Wender** of Sen. Ed Markey's office.

- At a "summer soirée" on public policy hosted by **Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer**'s legislative group last night at their offices, according to a PI tipster: Reps. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.), James Michael Johnson (R-La.) and Glenn Grothman (R-Wis.); **Mary Ann Pacelli** of the National Institute of Standards and Technology; **Karin Norton** of Samsung; **Tegan Gelfand** of CVS; **James Gelfand** of the **ERISA Industry Committee**; **Justin Edwards** of the **National Association of Enrolled Agents**; **Mark Greene** of the **Teamsters Alliance for Pension Protection**; **Brendan Desetti** of the **Software & Information Industry Association**; **Dave Levinthal** (a PI alum) and **Carrie Levine** of the **Center for Public Integrity**; **Telly Lovelace** of the **RNC**; and **Ibn Salaam** of **General Motors**.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

Hassan Clark Victory Fund (Rep. Katherine Clark, Sen. Maggie Hassan)

NEW PACs:

Florida First, Florida Forever (Super PAC)
One Generation (Leadership PAC: Rep. Ken Buck)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Avenue Strategies Global, LLC: Bank of Beirut
Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz: AIS PainCare
Ballard Partners: Jacksonville Port Authority
Ballard Partners: The Suzanne Wright Foundation
Capitol Counsel LLC: Westlake Chemical Partners LP
Capitol Hill Consulting Group: HealthStar, LLC
Eris Group (formerly known as Bartlett & Bendall): Cigna Corporation
Eris Group (formerly known as Bartlett & Bendall): U. S. Travel Association
Foresight Law + Policy PLLC: Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition
Hettinger Strategy Group LLC: J.A. Green and Company (formerly LLC) on behalf of Tanium, Inc.
Invariant LLC: Baxter Healthcare Corporation
Invariant LLC: National Restaurant Association
J M Burkman & Associates: Dan and Angela Manson
Liebman & Associates, Inc.: Shatterproof
Morrissey Strategic Partners, LLC: Six Ideas Before Breakfast, LLC
Plurus Strategies, LLC: CompTIA Certifications, LLC
Plurus Strategies, LLC: Lockheed Martin Corporation
Plurus Strategies, LLC: ML Strategies, LLC (on behalf of NAHEFFA)
Plurus Strategies, LLC: ML Strategies, LLC (on behalf of Physical Sciences Inc. (PSI))
Rich Feuer Anderson: Property Casualty Insurers Association of America
Rosemont Group: Blue & Gold Fleet, Inc

Rosemont Group: Medallion Foundation
Rosemont Group: Ryan Air
Starboard Government Affairs: American Wild Horse Campaign
The McGrath Group LLC: Oceana, Inc. [sic]
The Petrizzo Group, Inc.: BSQUARE Corporation
Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP: Core Mountain Enterprises, LLC
Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP: Friedkin Group, Inc.

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz: Seqirus, Inc.

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-influence/2017/06/08/lewandowskis-former-partner-signs-lebanese-bank-220742>

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Wed 10/4/2017 6:23:30 PM
Subject: Re: Definers

I am sitting with the contracts team right now to finalize what needs to be done

Thx ng

Sent from my iPhone

> On Oct 4, 2017, at 2:20 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

>

> What is the status on this? Ryan just asked for us to pull tv clips and we still don't have Definers who can provide this service to us.

>

> Let's get this done!

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Wed 11/8/2017 10:43:17 AM
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by ExxonMobil: Fireworks expected as White, Wheeler head to EPW — Democrats demand EPA officials testify — Reading the leaves on FERC comments

By Anthony Adragna | 11/08/2017 05:41 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén, Esther Whieldon, Darius Dixon and Eric Wolff

EPW TAKES UP WHEELER, WHITE NOMS: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will hear from two high-profile environmental nominees today: Andrew Wheeler for deputy EPA administrator and Kathleen Hartnett White to lead the White House's Council on Environmental Quality. White has a long history of controversial statements for Democrats to pull from, including her belief that "carbon dioxide is not a pollutant," her declaration that those who believe in climate change subscribe to a "kind of paganism" for "secular elites," and her 2014 blog post arguing fossil fuels helped end slavery in America.

But White's biggest liability may prove to be her position on the Renewable Fuel Standard. As ME wrote last week, Republican Sens. Deb Fischer and Joni Ernst are wary of White, who in 2013 called for repeal of the "counterproductive and ethically dubious" RFS. A single EPW defection could tank White's nomination, and Ernst proved last month with EPA air nominee William Wehrum that she's willing to walk the walk when defending ethanol.

Ranking member Tom Carper summed up his questions for White to ME: "I just want to ask her, 'Did you really say those things?' And there's a lot of them." Ahead of the hearing, nearly 50 environmental advocates sent a letter urging the committee to oppose her nomination. "Ms. White is unfit to hold the highest environmental post in the government to advise the president on the most pressing environmental issues our nation faces," the letter, signed by groups such as 350.org, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club, said.

More familiar face: Wheeler, meanwhile, is a known quantity for lawmakers who have been around for a while. He worked for Sen. Jim Inhofe in various capacities until 2009, when he departed as EPW staff director. He's been an attorney and lobbyist at Faegre Baker Daniels ever since, with his most notable client being Murray Energy, whose owner has proven adept at influencing the Trump administration. ME will be watching to see whether lawmakers delve into Wheeler's work with the ethanol group Growth Energy, which was first reported by POLITICO last month.

If you go: The hearing is at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 406.

BRIDENSTINE GETS COMMITTEE VOTE: The Senate Commerce Committee votes on Oklahoma Republican Rep. Jim Bridenstine's nomination to run NASA at 9:45 a.m. along with several other nominations. He's faced sharp criticism from Democrats, including ranking member Bill Nelson who slammed him in the nomination during his confirmation hearing: "NASA is not political. The leader should not be political." The panel also votes on Neil Jacobs' selection for another top NOAA post.

WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and the American Chemistry Council's Jonathan Corley was first to identify Sen. John Hoeven as the past president of North Dakota's state bank. For today: The father of which senator served three terms of governor of their state before corruption convictions ended their career? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

BIG NIGHT FOR DEMOCRATS: The League of Conservation Voters' \$4 million investment in Virginia races paid off handsomely as Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam trounced Republican Ed Gillespie to become the commonwealth's next governor. In New Jersey, Democrat Phil Murphy (also backed by green groups) decisively beat Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno for the governorship. In Flint, Mich., Mayor Karen Weaver survived a recall attempt by a wide margin. And Democrat Manka Dhingra appeared poised to win a Washington state Senate seat, effectively handing control of the entire state government to her party in a special election that drew millions in outside spending.

DEMOCRATS: IT'S TIME! More than 10 months after his confirmation, Senate and House Democrats are officially fed up with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's absence from congressional oversight hearings. After calling the lack of agency witnesses "unacceptable" during a Tuesday hearing, Energy and Commerce ranking member Frank Pallone demanded Chairman Greg Walden hold oversight hearings on EPA's review and management of chemicals under the revised Toxic Substances Control Act. "The Committee bears a responsibility to the American public to make sure EPA is protecting human health and the environment," he wrote, joined by senior committee Democrats Paul Tonko and Diana DeGette.

Not alone: All 16 Democrats on the House Science Committee sent their own letter to Chairman Lamar Smith demanding Pruitt come testify "as soon as possible," pointing out Gina McCarthy came before the full panel just four months after confirmation. "Not only is such oversight routine, but as a public official Administrator Pruitt has an obligation to address his conduct and management of EPA," they wrote.

And Carper too: "I wonder what my friend John Barrasso would have said if Gina McCarthy had refused to come before our committee for months? I wonder what my Republican EPW colleagues would have said if our committee hadn't held a single oversight hearing after a Democratic administration had issued multiple environmental executive orders and was the subject of several ongoing investigations? I heard them push for transparency for eight years, but suddenly there's silence over the last eight months."

TELL ME HOW YOU REALLY FEEL ABOUT THE DOE RULE (AGAIN!): Reply comments were due at FERC Tuesday night, and there was no less passion in this set of filings than in the first round two weeks ago. But ME was hard-pressed to see if anyone had really budged from their positions. FirstEnergy's comments started with a refrain that was almost poetic. "This proceeding is not about picking fuel supply winners and losers. This proceeding is not about the reliability of natural gas pipelines... This proceeding is not about the Polar Vortex...", former FERC general counsel Bill Scherman wrote on the company's behalf. Instead,

the company pressed for its own resiliency tariffs that would serve as a Band-Aid until new market rules were crafted. "Simply put, the imminent closure of resilient generation presents a clear and present danger to the Nation," Scherman wrote, echoing the call of Energy Secretary Rick Perry. "If the Commission does not act now, our national security will be put at risk."

Where FirstEnergy downplayed the usefulness of the 2014 "polar vortex," Murray Energy argued the critics just don't get it. "During the Polar Vortex, the country was relying on an unacceptably high percentage of interruptible gas-fired generation," the company said. There's been too much talk as it is, Murray said, and "FERC appears to have lost its moorings." Murray's filing even refers to an article by House Science Chairman Lamar Smith to tally how the federal government has repeatedly created energy subsidies with everything from tax policy to R&D funding.

Among those who tried to find middle ground was PJM itself, a critic and central target of Perry's plan, arguing that FERC should approve an alternative proposal that instructs all the grid operators to report back with new pricing or tariff proposals within 180 days. It also suggests creating a new docket aimed at defining resilience.

SOLAR FOR PUERTO RICO: The Solar Foundation, along with a host of companies and the Clinton Foundation, is launching an industry-wide push to get the lights back on in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Initial priorities will be restoring electricity to two food markets in San Juan and 62 rural medical clinics around the island. More on the project, Solar Saves Lives, available here.

**** Presented by ExxonMobil:** We're collaborating with FuelCell Energy on a novel idea to use fuel cells to capture carbon at natural gas power plants, and in the process reduce emissions and increase electrical output. This technology could be a game changer in addressing the world's growing need for energy, while also reducing the impact on the environment. Learn more. **

HYDROPOWER BILL STREAMS ONTO FLOOR: House lawmakers are expected today to consider H.R. 3043 (115), which would revamp the licensing process for hydropower projects. Ahead of the vote, utility and labor groups sent a letter encouraging support for what they called "a moderate proposal developed with bipartisan input" and warned "the current regulatory environment is placing hydropower at risk."

MODERATE CLIMATE REPUBLICAN HEADS FOR THE EXITS: South Jersey Republican Rep. Frank LoBiondo, one of the few congressional GOPers to land environmental group endorsements in recent years, will retire from Congress. With LoBiondo and Rep. Dave Reichert departing at the end of this Congress, Reps. Chris Smith and Leonard Lance will be the two remaining House Republicans that backed cap and trade legislation in 2009.

LET'S KICK AGAIN? Chatter's already getting louder that Congress may have to consider another kick-the-can extension of government funding by Dec. 8 to keep the lights on, but top Appropriators aren't throwing in the towel yet, Pro Budget & Appropriations Jennifer Scholtes and Sarah Ferris report. "So, hopefully, if we consider one, it will be very, very short," Appropriations Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen told them. Others say it's too early to give up.

"I don't think we even need to be thinking about a CR," says [Hal Rogers](#), who endured tough spending negotiations many times in his six years of chairing the House Appropriations panel.

TRUMP RELATIVE MOVES UP AT DOE: Kyle Yunaska, brother-in-law to Eric Trump, seems to be climbing the ladder at the Energy Department's Energy Policy and Systems Analysis office recently, adding the title of chief of staff to his resume, in addition to his senior adviser role. A DOE source told ME that Sean Cunningham, the head of EPSA, made the announcement in a staff email last week. Yunaska joined DOE early this year as a member of the "beachhead" team. His sister, Lara, married the president's son in 2014. (Greenwire first reported the move.)

ZINKE HIRES FORMER NAVY SEALS TO KEY ROLES: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has hired former Navy Seal Mike Argo as deputy chief of staff and former SEAL Captain Rick May to head up the agency's focus on increasing recreation opportunities on public land. Speaking at a webcast honoring veterans event in Interior's Washington headquarters, Zinke, who is himself a former SEAL, said "we're bringing recreation back."

MARKING ON UP: Nine bills are on the House Natural Resources Committee [mark up agenda](#) today, but most of the attention will be on the SECURE American Energy Act [H.R. 4239 \(115\)](#). Among other provisions, the bill would give more oil and gas permitting power to the states, create an offshore oil and gas revenue program for East Coast drilling and roll back Obama-era offshore drilling rules. ME hears the measure may be fast-tracked to the floor as quickly as next week. Also of note: [H.R. 2907 \(115\)](#) from Rep. [Scott Tipton](#), which would require an all-of-the-above quadrennial federal onshore energy production strategy.

PANELS LOOKS AT GEOENGINEERING LATEST: Two House Science subcommittees today [take a look at](#) the latest technologies and possibilities concerning geoengineering, in which humans attempt to alter the worldwide climate system in effort to avoid human-caused climate change. The committee will hear from experts on reducing the total sunlight hitting the earth and pulling carbon from atmosphere. But ahead of the session, nearly two dozen leading proponents warn the committee in [a letter](#) that geoengineering should not be viewed as a substitute for swift action to curb greenhouse gases that are fueling climate change. "Geoengineering is not a silver bullet, and treating it as one could greatly increase already severe climate change risks," they wrote. The hearing kicks off at 10 a.m. in Rayburn 2318.

MAIL CALL! DON'T EXPAND CCS CREDITS: More than 40 environmental groups released [a letter](#) Tuesday urging lawmakers not to include an expansion and extension of the Section 45Q tax credit for carbon capture and sequestration in an emerging tax package. A [second letter](#) warned efforts to subsidize CCS technologies are "false solutions" to climate change and impose significant burdens on communities on the front lines.

CHANGE COURSE! Sixty-two members of Congress, led by Rep. [Bill Foster](#), asked Pruitt to reverse a policy instituted last week barring any scientists receiving agency funds from serving on scientific advisory boards. Letter [here](#).

NOT TO BE LEFT OUT: Representatives from the hydropower, biomass power, waste-to-energy and biogas industries sent [a letter](#) to the top Republican tax writers asking them to

"provide parity and a level playing field for all renewable energy technologies" as they work on the tax package. HR1 "would extend the same tax treatment to fiber-optic solar energy, fuel cells and small wind energy property that is afforded solar technology under current law," they write. "However, the bill fails to provide equal treatment for hydropower, biomass power, waste-to-energy and biogas."

COMMERCE SET TO DO ITS BIODIESEL DUTY: The Commerce Department is expected to announce a final decision on its countervailing duties and anti-dumping cases against Argentine and Indonesian imports of biodiesel. Commerce has already started collecting the duty after making a preliminary determination that both countries were undercutting U.S. biodiesel.

EPA SEEKS REMAND OF PARTS OF COAL ASH RULE AHEAD OF ARGUMENTS: EPA on Tuesday asked the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals to remand key parts of the coal ash rule to the agency for reconsideration ahead of Nov. 20 oral arguments that could see the case put on ice. The court in September said it would not put the case on hold indefinitely while EPA reconsiders the rule, though it did order attorneys for all sides to be prepared to discuss abeyance at arguments. In a new motion, EPA asks that five specific parts of the rule be remanded without being vacated, meaning they would remain in place while EPA reworks them. Because it is reconsidering the rule, EPA argued, its attorneys "will likely be unable to represent EPA's present position on these issues at oral argument."

Four of the provisions are related to challenges brought by industry groups: rules for temporary coal ash piles; EPA's rules for inactive ponds; a lack of a risk-based compliance option; and a provision dealing with large piles of coal ash intended for "beneficial use" in products like wallboard. The fifth provision, dealing with regulation of legacy ponds, was raised by environmental groups. The industry challengers had no problem with the remand request, but greens plan to object to their provision being remanded.

APPROVED: The California State Water Resources Control Board green lighted a 10-year plan for adding new wildlife habitat and curbing toxic dust from the Salton Sea lake in Southern California, Pro's Esther Whieldon reports.

PERRY SPEAKS... ON TAX OVERHAUL: Even as he attends meetings this week in Paris, Energy Secretary Rick Perry released an op-ed in Syracuse, N.Y.'s local paper Tuesday strongly backing Republican tax overhaul efforts. "Americans deserve a low tax climate and responsible regulation to spur the economic and energy revolution we have been waiting for," the former Texas governor wrote.

NOT MINCING WORDS: Actor Alec Baldwin didn't hold back on his dislike of Pruitt during an interview with *Entertainment Weekly*. "He's done more damage to one department than anyone in American history," Baldwin, who plays Trump on SNL, said. "It's like being in a vegetarian restaurant and the chef decides he's only gonna cook steak, to insist everyone eat a meal that's abhorrent to them."

QUICK HITS

- Severe air pollution declared public health emergency in Delhi, India. [ABC News](#).
- France backpedals on pledge to cut reliance on nuclear power. [AP](#).
- Fresh From Deluge, Miami Weighs Bonds to Gird for Climate Change. [Bloomberg](#).
- Kinder Morgan Canada denied expedited appeal for oil pipeline. [Reuters](#).
- GOP tax bill would end deduction for wildfire and earthquake victims — but not recent hurricane victims. [Los Angeles Times](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

9:45 a.m. — Senate Commerce Committee holds [vote](#) on the Bridenstine nomination and others, Dirksen 106

10:00 a.m. — The House Science Committee's Energy Subcommittee and Environment Subcommittee hold a [joint hearing](#) on "Geoengineering: Innovation, Research, and Technology," Rayburn 2318

10:00 a.m. — [Markup](#) on Offshore-Onshore Energy Bill, 8 Additional Measures, House Natural Resources Committee, 1324 Longworth

10:00 a.m. — Senate Environment and Public Works Committee holds [hearing](#) on White and Wheeler nominations, Dirksen 406

10:30 a.m. — API hosts press call on latest efforts to reform the Renewable Fuel Standard, RSVP: press@api.org

12:15 p.m. — EPW Democrats hold press conference on environmental nominees, Senate Swamp

2:00 p.m. — Rep. Keith Ellison hosts [briefing](#) on zero waste and environmental justice, Cannon 122

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To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/11/fireworks-expected-as-white-wheeler-head-to-epw-025437>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

EPA deputy nominee Wheeler represented ethanol group [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 10/18/2017 03:47 PM EDT

Andrew Wheeler, the nominee for EPA deputy administrator, worked for the ethanol group Growth Energy this year, according to his financial disclosure documents.

Wheeler, an attorney at Faegre Baker Daniels, was previously known to lobby for coal producer Murray Energy, among several other companies, as revealed in lobbying disclosures. But his [financial disclosure](#) shows Wheeler provided "strategic advice and counseling" rather than lobbying services to Growth Energy.

Growth Energy hired FBD for lobbying earlier this year, according to [records](#), but Wheeler was never named on those disclosures.

"We hired Faegre Baker Daniels for lobbying and consultant help on renewable fuels issues. Andrew Wheeler has not lobbied on our behalf but has provided consultant services," Growth Energy spokeswoman Jenni Roberson said in an email. Wheeler did not return a request for comment today.

Growth Energy was one of the groups that successfully sued EPA over its 2014-2016 Renewable Fuel Standard volumes. It has also opposed EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's recent move to potentially weaken biodiesel requirements, a proposal that has angered several key corn state Republican senators and threatened to hold up several other EPA nominees.

The financial disclosure shows Wheeler also provided advice and counsel, but not lobbying work, to International Paper, Archer Daniels Midland and General Mills. Previously reported lobbying clients included Xcel Energy, Bear Head LNG and Energy Fuels Resources.

WHAT'S NEXT: Wheeler was nominated earlier this month and has yet to have a nomination hearing in the Senate.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Northam beats Gillespie in Virginia governor's race [Back](#)

By Gabriel Debenedetti | 11/07/2017 05:59 PM EDT

Democrat Ralph Northam was elected governor of Virginia on Tuesday in a sweeping victory that defied the conventional wisdom of a tightening race.

The lieutenant governor's victory joins Democrat Phil Murphy's win in New Jersey's gubernatorial race to hand Democrats new hope in the Donald Trump era.

After a bruising race against former Republican National Committee chairman Ed Gillespie, Northam outran Hillary Clinton in a state she carried by 5 points while losing the presidency in November 2016. A series of late-campaign controversies hitting Northam had Republicans cautiously optimistic that Gillespie could close the gap and pull off an upset, but Democrats rode a wave of anti-Trump backlash and satisfaction with outgoing Gov. Terry McAuliffe's administration.

"It was said that the eyes of the nation are now on the commonwealth," Northam said in his victory speech. "Today, Virginians have answered and spoken. Virginians have told us to end the divisiveness, that we will not condone hatred and bigotry, and to end the politics that have torn this country apart."

Murphy, a former U.S. ambassador, defeated Kim Guadagno, New Jersey's lieutenant governor, to replace unpopular Republican Gov. Chris Christie. Murphy led the race from the start by double digits.

The pair of off-year governors races is traditionally read as a bellwether for the next year's midterm elections, but this year the results — particularly in Virginia — are also likely to be read as referenda on the state of each party's national well-being in the age of Trump.

Democrats had eyed the race nervously, as an opportunity to both demonstrate political momentum and help the party dig out from a historic low in terms of governorships. Democrats currently have just 15 compared to Republicans' 34 (Alaska Gov. Bill Walker is an independent), so party officials had for months seen flipping the New Jersey seat and retaining Virginia's as top priorities. Come January, they will hold 16.

"This was a vote for an inclusive Virginia," said former Rep. Tom Perriello, who lost to Northam in the primary but went on to endorse him and help lead his party's charge in the House of Delegates, where Democrats on Tuesday elected the first Latina members of the House of Delegates and a transgender candidate. "Gillespie went all-in on an identity politics agenda, and we rejected it."

Near tears with excitement, Perriello sounded a bullish note on his party's future.

"We're seeing the Prop 187 of Virginia, and probably of America," he said, referring to the famous California ballot proposition targeting illegal immigration that helped Republicans win in 1994 but has been credited with turning state voters against the Republican Party ever since.

Gillespie sought to strike a balance between engaging moderates with talk of jobs and taxes and firing up his base by running ads on illegal immigration and sanctuary cities — which don't exist in Virginia — and cultural touchstones like Confederate monuments and NFL anthem protests. Gillespie did not initially home in on those subjects, but they became a bigger part of his

campaign after he nearly lost the June Republican primary to Trump's former Virginia campaign chairman.

Trump, who tweeted in support of Gillespie before the election, quickly turned on him after the race was called.

"Ed Gillespie worked hard but did not embrace me or what I stand for," Trump tweeted, before referencing Republican special election wins earlier this year. "Don't forget, Republicans won 4 out of 4 House seats, and with the economy doing record numbers, we will continue to win, even bigger than before!"

Democratic turnout in Virginia's primary skyrocketed from previous years' levels. Party leaders including former President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden swooped into the state to back Northam in the final month.

"The initial goal was for Democrats to nationalize the race and make it about the president; our initial goal was to localize the race and make it about Virginia," Virginia Republican Party chairman John Whitbeck said before Tuesday's vote. "If we win, it will say that a mainstream conservative like Ed Gillespie can win in an era of uncertainty. What it says about the Democrats is they have a lot of soul-searching to do: I don't think they know what their message is, their agenda is."

Though Trump loomed over the race, Gillespie did not actually appear with him in Virginia — the first time in years a sitting president did not cross the Potomac River to campaign in the governor's race. "Ralph Northam will allow crime to be rampant in Virginia. He's weak on crime, weak on our GREAT VETS, Anti-Second Amendment and has been horrible on Virginia economy," Trump tweeted during his Asia trip on Tuesday. Gillespie appeared multiple times with Vice President Mike Pence, who is more popular among conservatives and perceived as less likely to fire up Democrats who can't stand the president.

In New Jersey, Murphy was heavily favored in large part because of the unpopularity of Christie. Guadagno, Christie's deputy, tried tacking away from Christie, but the former presidential candidate's abysmal 14 percent approval rating — according to a late October Suffolk poll — proved to be a serious drag on his hoped-for successor.

While Guadagno tried tarnishing Murphy's image by painting him in ads as soft on illegal immigration, Murphy — a former Goldman Sachs executive and Democratic National Committee finance chairman — relied heavily on support from local and national-level Democrats to pad his comfortable margin.

In Virginia, Democrats also aimed to peel back the GOP advantage in the state legislature. The party hopes that Northam's win, combined with continued down-ballot gains, will put Democrats in position to exert more influence over the next round of political map-drawing in Virginia at the end of this decade.

Democrats also won the closely watched mayoral races in Manchester, New Hampshire, and St.

Petersburg, Florida.

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LoBiondo to retire from Congress [Back](#)

By Elena Schneider | 11/07/2017 02:51 PM EDT

New Jersey Rep. [Frank LoBiondo](#), a senior Republican on the Armed Services Committee, will not run for reelection in 2018, he announced Tuesday.

LoBiondo cited committee term-limits for his departure, but the 12-term incumbent also took parting shots at partisan gridlock in Congress.

"There is no longer middle ground to honestly debate issues and put forward solutions," LoBiondo said in a statement. "... Those of us who came to Congress to change Washington for the better through good governance are now the outliers. In legislating, we previously fought against allowing the perfect to become the enemy of the good. Today a vocal and obstinate minority within both parties has hijacked good legislation in pursuit of no legislation.

LoBiondo said that his decision isn't "electoral" and that he was "very confident voters would again reelect me" in 2018 had he decided to run for reelection.

The decision opens a battleground district in southern New Jersey that LoBiondo has held easily since 1994. New Jersey's 2nd District backed President Donald Trump with 50.6 percent of the vote to Hillary Clinton's 46 percent in 2016. But former President Barack Obama also won the seat twice with between 53 and 54 percent of the vote.

Harry Hurley, a New Jersey talk radio host, [first reported](#) the news of LoBiondo's retirement.

LoBiondo raised \$117,000 in the last fundraising quarter, among the lowest totals reported by House Republican incumbents, sparking speculation that he would retire instead of running for reelection. Though the district has 147,000 registered Democrats to 132,000 registered Republicans, LoBiondo has managed to easily and consistently win reelection thanks in part to strong labor ties.

National Democrats have actively recruited state Sen. Jeff Van Drew, a conservative-leaning Democrat, in years past, but he's declined to run. Democrat Tanzie Youngblood, a retired teacher, already launched her bid to challenge LoBiondo in July. Democrats also floated retired judge Ray Batten as a potential candidate for the district.

Republican operatives in the state floated two potential GOP candidates to replace LoBiondo: State Assemblyman Chris Brown, who's on the ballot for a state Senate seat on Tuesday, and

former Atlantic County Sheriff Frank Balles.

LoBiondo's retirement adds another major opportunity for Democrats to pick up a House seat in New Jersey. Already, two normally well-entrenched New Jersey GOP incumbents in the northern half of the state, [Rodney Frelinghuysen](#) and [Leonard Lance](#), have attracted several credible Democratic challengers who are raising substantial amounts of campaign cash.

LoBiondo, a member of the moderate Tuesday Group caucus, is the latest in a string of what Rep. [Charlie Dent](#) (R-Pa.) called "governing-wing" Republicans who have opted against running for reelection in 2018. Dent, Florida Rep. [Ileana Ros-Lehtinen](#), Washington Rep. [Dave Reichert](#) and Michigan Rep. [Dave Trott](#) have all announced their plans for retirement.

Matt Friedman, Jake Sherman and Alex Isenstadt contributed to this report.

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Pruitt to reconsider parts of 2015 coal ash rule [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 09/14/2017 04:15 PM EDT

EPA will reconsider key portions of the 2015 coal ash rule, according to a [letter](#) from Administrator Scott Pruitt to industry officials released by Earthjustice.

Two petitions were filed in May by AES Puerto Rico and the Utility Solid Waste Activities Group, an umbrella group whose members include the Edison Electric Institute, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, American Public Power Association and more than a hundred utilities and related companies.

Pruitt's letter does not specify which parts of the rule he plans to reconsider, but both USWAG and AES identified specific issues with the regulation.

[USWAG's petition](#) asked that pending deadlines be pushed back and called for the rule to be changed in the wake of a December 2016 law changing the enforcement scheme in order to accommodate new management options based on site-specific risk analyses rather than the original "burdensome, inflexible, and often impracticable requirements." USWAG also argued that various executive orders from President Donald Trump dealing with regulations justify cracking the rule open.

[AES' petition](#) focused on requirements for how power plants store their coal ash piles before they are moved off site to be disposed of or to make products such as concrete and wallboard.

Oral arguments at the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals over the rule are currently scheduled for Oct. 17, but EPA is likely to ask the case be put on hold while it reconsiders the rule.

WHAT'S NEXT: Pruitt will initiate a formal reconsideration process. Any actual changes to the rule will have to go through public comment and will be open to legal challenge.

To view online [click here](#).

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Court delays coal ash arguments to November [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 09/27/2017 04:54 PM EDT

The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals today [granted a one-month delay](#) in arguments over EPA's 2015 coal ash rule following Administrator Scott Pruitt's [decision to reconsider](#) key parts of the regulation.

Arguments had been scheduled for Oct. 17, but a three-judge panel ordered them delayed until Nov. 20.

The judges ordered EPA to reveal by Nov. 15 which portions of the rule will be reconsidered "and setting forth with specificity the timeline for reconsideration." In addition, all sides, including industry and environmental challengers, are supposed to file new briefs by Oct. 11 addressing whether the new [state-based coal ash permitting program](#) that passed Congress as part of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act at the end of 2016 affect the broader lawsuit at all. And the court told attorneys to be ready at arguments to discuss whether a longer delay in the lawsuit is appropriate, opening up the possibility of further delay.

The court set 90 minutes' worth of arguments in total, split into four sections: Three dealing with various legal and technical challenges to the rule and one on whether the case should be delayed longer.

The case will be heard by Judges Karen LeCraft Henderson, a George H.W. Bush appointee, and two Obama appointees, Judges Patricia Millett and Cornelia Pillard.

WHAT'S NEXT: The parties must submit briefs regarding the permitting program by Oct. 11. Oral argument is scheduled for Nov. 20.

To view online [click here](#).

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California board approves 10-year Salton Sea water mitigation plan [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 11/07/2017 06:31 PM EDT

The California State Water Resources Control Board today approved the state's 10-year plan for adding new wildlife habitat and curbing toxic dust from the Salton Sea lake in Southern California.

The plan addresses expectations the 350-square-mile lake will shrink by one-third as the Imperial Irrigation District, other water users and states continue cutting back on water usage amid diminishing Colorado River supplies.

The lake is an ecological haven for migratory birds, but its receding shoreline is polluted with chemicals from farming irrigation drainage, and the resulting dust from the dry lake bed has caused asthma problems in nearby communities.

The plan is also key to Imperial agreeing to a voluntary water conservation compact among lower Colorado River basin states to preserve water levels at Lake Mead, the river's most important reservoir. Under a deal that expires this year, Imperial has been putting extra water into the Salton Sea in exchange for the state's pledge to install mitigation projects — a commitment California has failed to meet. Imperial has been reluctant to agree to further water cuts without assurances the state will actually act.

The plan outlines the state acreage goals for habitat creation and dust suppression, requires it to come up with a long-term mitigation plan for the Salton Sea by 2022, and would have board staff create a correction plan if the state falls more than 20 percent short of any annual goal.

WHAT'S NEXT: Californians will vote on a ballot measure in June 2018 to issue \$200 million in bonds for Salton Sea projects.

To view online [click here](#).

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This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

To: Fimrite, Peter[PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 2/12/2018 9:27:19 PM
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

In terms of these additional questions, we have addressed them in interviews with The New York Times and CBS News and you can pull your answers from them.

•<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/02/podcasts/the-daily/scott-pruitt-epa.html>

•<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/scott-pruitt-talks-with-major-garrett-full-interview/>

There was a lot of work from various people to get you the answers to your questions. We look forward to reading your story!

From: Fimrite, Peter [mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 4:21 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Any chance I could talk to Scott Pruitt? I need him to explain his philosophy, why he is doing what he is doing, ie: how the EPA had been weaponized in the past to choose winners and losers; how superfund sites have languished because of a lack of decision making; that climate change cannot be regulated because it was not part of the original mission; why it is important for him to streamline the agency. Even a statement from him or a series of quotes I could use along these lines would be helpful if he's not available.

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 10:00 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

The answers with my names next to them are on the record. The tea leaves is not but let me see if I can get that approved. Does that work?

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 12:58 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday

that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every employee, to EPA’s Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words “climate change” were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **“Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focused on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **“Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **“No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **“We don’t discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9 Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work. 415-777-8454

Cell. 415-298-2197

Email. pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter. @pfimrite

To: Dennis, Brady[Brady.Dennis@washpost.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:02:26 PM
Subject: Hey

Your story says it was a no-bid contract. That is not accurate and we have this on-the-record statement regarding that “no-bid” language:

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Morris, Madeline[morris.madeline@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Mon 8/14/2017 8:53:00 PM
Subject: EPA Evening News Highlights 8.14.17
EPA Evening News Highlights 8.14.17.docx

EPA Evening News Highlights 8.14.17

NTK Network: Report: Obama EPA Paid Unearned Overtime To Employees

A new report from the EPA Inspector General has shown that the Obama-era agency approved unearned overtime payments to its employees in at least one administrative region. According to the report, there were 79 instances of EPA employees receiving overtime pay that exceeded the agency's bi-weekly overtime cap in the Pacific Northwest. Most of the 79 exceedances lacked a supporting waiver request; Region 10 provided 15 waiver requests that covered only 21 of the 79 instances. The OIG's review of the 15 waiver requests showed that requests cited both emergencies and work that was critical to the mission of the agency as justification.

Politico: EPA To Revamp 2015 Power Plant Discharges Rule

EPA will conduct a new rulemaking to "potentially revise" portions of a 2015 regulation limiting toxic discharges from coal-fired power plants, according to a letter sent by Administrator Scott Pruitt to the U.S. Small Business Administration Friday and obtained by POLITICO today. The 2015 rule set new technology-based limits on heavy metals like mercury and arsenic that power plants discharge into waterways. The previous limits had not been updated in more than 30 years.

The Washington Examiner: EPA Chief, A Former Baseball Exec, Wants 'World, World Series'

President Trump's EPA chief has an idea that is sure to stir up a world debate. And it has nothing to do with the climate. Instead, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, former co-owner of Major League Baseball's AAA club in Oklahoma City, is calling for an international world series. In Iowa and appearing on WHO TV, Pruitt played along with a host's rapid-fire "Quick Six" questions, one of which was how baseball can be improved. Pruitt, who won a reputation as a marketing genius for his former Oklahoma City Redhawks, said: I think we

need to do more to export the product internationally. There's such a hunger and desire in Asia particularly. We need to work on that.

E&E News: Greens launch legal war on EPA's TSCA rules

Several green groups launched a legal campaign last week against the Trump administration over a pair of rules issued by U.S. EPA under the nation's new chemicals law. Last year, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, a reform to the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act. It requires EPA to conduct risk assessments of chemicals without regard to cost and to protect vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women. At issue in the litigation are EPA's framework rules for the new law. One of them established the process and criteria for identifying high-priority chemicals for risk evaluations, while the other established the system for determining if the chemicals present an unreasonable risk to health or the environment. The administration issued final versions in June. "The activities we are announcing today demonstrate this administration's commitment to providing regulatory certainty to American businesses, while protecting human health and the environment," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said at the time.

E&E News: FERC's Chatterjee Vows To Support Coal, Nuclear

In his first substantive public remarks since being named chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission last week, Neil Chatterjee talked up the importance of coal and "baseload power." In the comments, part of an official FERC podcast called "Open Access," Chatterjee said his first priority will be to get started on an accumulated backlog of orders. "I heard about it all through the Senate confirmation process. There's a lot of consternation out there, and I'm committed to working with my colleagues to get after it right away," Chatterjee said.

National Evening News Highlights 8.14.17

The Washington Post: Trump Denounces KKK, Neo-Nazis As 'Repugnant' As He Seeks To Quell Criticism Of His Response To Charlottesville

President Trump denounced the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis by name Monday, declaring racist hate groups "repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans," as he sought to tamp down mounting criticism of his response to the killing of a counterprotester at a white supremacist rally

in Charlottesville over the weekend. “Anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable,” Trump said in brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, where he returned after a week of vacation in Bedminster, N.J. “We condemn in the strongest possible terms the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence. It has no place in America.”

The Wall Street Journal: Trump Signs Order Increasing Trade Pressure On China

President Donald Trump took a step Monday in his effort to ramp up trade pressure on China, directing aides to explore the prospect of sanctioning Beijing for the “unfair” acquisition of American high technology. The directive, signed in a ceremony in the White House’s Diplomatic Reception Room, was the first formal China trade action taken by a president who has long blasted the country for improperly aggressive commercial practices. “The theft of intellectual property by foreign countries costs our nation millions of jobs and billions and billions of dollars each and every year,” Mr. Trump said. “For too long this wealth has been drained from our country while Washington has done nothing.”

The Washington Post: Trump Fires Back After The CEO Of Merck Resigned From His Manufacturing Council

The chief executive of Merck said Monday in a tweet that he was resigning from President Trump's manufacturing council, saying he was doing so “as CEO of Merck and as a matter of personal conscience” and that “America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy, which run counter to the American ideal that all people are created equal.”

Politico: Obama Team Was Warned In 2014 About Russian Interference

The Obama administration received multiple warnings from national security officials between 2014 and 2016 that the Kremlin was ramping up its intelligence operations and building disinformation networks it could use to disrupt the U.S. political system, according to more than half a dozen current and former officials. As early as 2014, the administration received a report that quoted a well-connected Russian source as saying that the Kremlin was building a disinformation arm that could be used to interfere in Western democracies. The report, according to an official familiar with it, included a quote from the Russian source telling U.S. officials in Moscow, “You have no idea how extensive these networks are in Europe ... and in the U.S., Russia has penetrated media organizations, lobbying firms, political parties, governments and militaries in all of these places.”

NO TRUMP TWEETS

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NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/report-obama-epa-paid-uneared-overtime-to-employees/>

Report: Obama EPA Paid Uneared Overtime To Employees

By NTK Staff, 8/14/17

A new report from the EPA Inspector General has shown that the Obama-era agency approved uneared overtime payments to its employees in at least one administrative region.

According to the report, there were 79 instances of EPA employees receiving overtime pay that exceeded the agency's bi-weekly overtime cap in the Pacific Northwest:

Most of the 79 exceedances lacked a supporting waiver request; Region 10 provided 15 waiver requests that covered only 21 of the 79 instances. The OIG's review of the 15 waiver requests showed that requests cited both emergencies and work that was critical to the mission of the agency as justification.

These 15 approvals also lacked the proper justification, the Inspector General wrote.

Furthermore, there appeared to be no mechanisms to prevent such abuses of overtime payroll:

Based on interviews with officials and personnel, we learned that there is no clear line of responsibility to maintain documentation for waiver requests or to track requests and approvals between the region, OARM and OCFO. Neither OARM nor OCFO could provide a list of waivers for the period requested or supporting documentation.

This isn't the first time that the EPA under Scott Pruitt's leadership has moved to end the luxurious waste of taxpayer dollars at the agency. In June, Pruitt ended a \$1 million employee fitness center program, after reports of waste came in from national offices.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/08/epa-to-revamp-2015-power-plant-discharges-rule-091780>

EPA To Revamp 2015 Power Plant Discharges Rule

By Annie Snider, 8/14/17

EPA will conduct a new rulemaking to "potentially revise" portions of a 2015 regulation limiting toxic discharges from coal-fired power plants, according to a letter sent by Administrator Scott Pruitt to the U.S. Small Business Administration Friday and obtained by POLITICO today. The 2015 rule set new technology-based limits on heavy metals like mercury and arsenic that power plants discharge into waterways. The previous limits had not been updated in more than 30 years.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-chief-a-former-baseball-exec-wants-world-world-series/article/2631464>

EPA chief, a former baseball exec, wants 'world, world series'

By: Paul Bedard, 8/14/17, 1:37 p.m.

President Trump's EPA chief has an idea that is sure to stir up a world debate.

And it has nothing to do with the climate.

Instead, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, former co-owner of Major League Baseball's AAA club in Oklahoma City, is calling for an international world series.

In Iowa and appearing on WHO TV, Pruitt played along with a host's rapid-fire "Quick Six" questions, one of which was how baseball can be improved.

Pruitt, who won a reputation as a marketing genius for his former Oklahoma City Redhawks, said:

I think we need to do more to export the product internationally. There's such a hunger and desire in Asia particularly. We need to work on that.

I think baseball is one of those sports we can actually truly have a world series, we can have a world competition. We've seen it in other instances and I think that's an opportunity that we need to be pursuing.

Pruitt, who sold his stake in the team after being elected Oklahoma attorney general in 2010, ended the interview with a prediction: The Chicago Cubs will win the World Series "again in the next five years."

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/08/14/stories/1060058755>

Greens launch legal war on EPA's TSCA rules

Amanda Reilly, 8/14/17

Several green groups launched a legal campaign last week against the Trump administration over a pair of rules issued by U.S. EPA under the nation's new chemicals law.

Environmentalists filed lawsuits Thursday and Friday in at least three federal appellate courts around the country seeking review of the rules, which EPA issued in June to guide risk evaluations and prioritization of chemical substances.

The new standards "leave the public at risk from chemicals commonly found in our homes, schools and workplaces," said Richard Denison, lead scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund, one of the plaintiffs.

"Our legal challenges seek to hold EPA to the law and ensure that the public is protected as Congress intended," Denison said.

Last year, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, a reform to the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act.

It requires EPA to conduct risk assessments of chemicals without regard to cost and to protect vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women.

At issue in the litigation are EPA's framework rules for the new law. One of them established the process and criteria for identifying high-priority chemicals for risk evaluations, while the other established the system for determining if the chemicals present an unreasonable risk to health or the environment. The administration issued final versions in June.

"The activities we are announcing today demonstrate this administration's commitment to providing regulatory certainty to American businesses, while protecting human health and the environment," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said at the time (E&E News PM, June 22).

"The new process for evaluating existing chemicals outlined in these rules will increase public confidence in chemical safety without stifling innovation," he said.

2nd and 4th circuits

In their lawsuits, the environmental groups accuse EPA under the new Trump administration of unlawfully weakening the rules.

EDF, which filed its lawsuit in the New York-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, said EPA reversed the position taken during the Obama administration that it must consider all of the conditions for use of a given chemical substance.

The final rule stated that the agency may "exclude certain activities that EPA has determined to be conditions of use" from its risk analysis.

In a blog post, the Natural Resources Defense Council said it opposes the new rules because they give EPA "nearly unlimited discretion" to determine which uses of a chemical it considers to determine whether a substance is unsafe.

The resulting "incomplete analysis is likely to be wrong and could lead EPA to conclude that a chemical does not pose an unreasonable risk when it actually does," NRDC senior attorney Daniel Rosenberg and senior scientist Jennifer Sass wrote in the post.

NRDC, together with the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments and Cape Fear River Watch, sued EPA over the rules in the Virginia-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

9th Circuit

Separately, Earthjustice filed a complaint Thursday in the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of the Environmental Working Group, WE ACT for Environmental Justice, the Learning Disabilities Association of America, the United Steelworkers, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Environmental Health Strategy Center and the Sierra Club.

Labor unions joined the groups, as did Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families; the Vermont Public Interest Research Group; and the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization.

The latter trio of groups is represented by Robert Sussman, a top EPA official in the Obama and Clinton administrations who has warned that the Trump administration may back down from last year's compromise reform law (Greenwire, July 20).

In statements announcing the lawsuits, groups blamed the president's choice of Nancy Beck to serve as the top political official in EPA's chemical safety office for the changes.

Prior to joining the administration, Beck was the senior director of regulatory science policy at the American Chemistry Council, a chemical industry trade group that generally opposes stricter regulations.

"The EPA's newly adopted rules — overseen by a former high-level chemical industry official with head-spinning conflicts of interest — will leave children, communities and workers vulnerable to dangerous chemicals," Earthjustice attorney Eve Gartner said in a statement.

"This lawsuit is about one thing: holding the Trump EPA to the letter of the law and ensuring it fulfills its mandate to protect the public," she said.

Beck has pushed back against greens' concerns about her appointment (Greenwire, July 17).

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/08/14/stories/1060058757>

FERC's Chatterjee Vows To Support Coal, Nuclear

Sam Mintz, 8/14/17

In his first substantive public remarks since being named chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission last week, Neil Chatterjee talked up the importance of coal and "baseload power."

In the comments, part of an official FERC podcast called "Open Access," Chatterjee said his first priority will be to get started on an accumulated backlog of orders.

"I heard about it all through the Senate confirmation process. There's a lot of consternation out there, and I'm committed to working with my colleagues to get after it right away," Chatterjee said.

Millions of dollars of infrastructure, including major natural gas pipelines, has been in limbo since FERC Chairman Norman Bay resigned in February, leaving the body without a quorum and unable to give final approvals.

Chatterjee also said he wanted to focus on ensuring the reliability and resilience of the electric system — specifically by supporting "baseload" coal and power plants.

"I believe that generation, including our existing coal and nuclear fleet, need to be properly

compensated to recognize the value they provide to the system," he said.

The former aide to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) was particularly vocal about coal. "I'm a Kentucky native. I've seen firsthand throughout my life how important a contribution coal makes to an affordable and reliable electric system," he said.

"Last year, coal provided over 80 percent of the electricity in Kentucky," he said. "As a nation, we need to ensure that coal, along with gas and renewables, continue to be part of our diverse fuel mix."

The comments align with the premise that Energy Secretary Rick Perry gave when ordering a controversial study of the electric grid: that coal and nuclear plants are essential for the grid's reliability.

Progressive and environmental groups — and many independent experts — have challenged that concept, arguing it is possible to maintain stability even while continuing to use more renewables like wind and solar, and less coal (Greenwire, July 11).

Chatterjee, who was sworn in to the commission last week along with former Pennsylvania regulator Robert Powelson, is holding the gavel only on an interim basis. Jones Day energy lawyer Kevin McIntyre will take over if and when confirmed.

McIntyre and another nominee, Democratic Senate aide Richard Glick, are scheduled to face the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee for a confirmation hearing Sept. 7.

The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/08/14/trump-denounces-kkk-neo-nazis-as-justice-department-launches-civil-rights-probe-into-charlottesville-death/>

Trump Denounces KKK, Neo-Nazis As ‘Repugnant’ As He Seeks To Quell Criticism Of His Response To Charlottesville

By David Nakamura, 8/14/17

President Trump denounced the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis by name Monday, declaring racist hate groups “repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans,” as he sought to tamp down mounting criticism of his response to the killing of a counterprotester at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville over the weekend.

“Anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable,” Trump said in brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, where he returned after a week of vacation in Bedminster, N.J. “We condemn in the strongest possible terms the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence. It has no place in America.”

Trump added: “Racism is evil and those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups that are repugnant to all that we hold dear as Americans.”

The statement came two days after the president failed to specifically condemn the white supremacist rally during which a woman was killed and as many as 19 wounded by a driver who reportedly espoused racist and pro-Nazi sentiments and had taken part in the “Unite the Right” march in Charlottesville. Trump, who met Monday with Attorney General Jeff Sessions and FBI Director Christopher Wray, reiterated that the Justice Department has launched a civil rights probe into the death of Heather Heyer, 32, who was killed when a car allegedly driven by James Alex Fields Jr., of Ohio slammed into a group of counterprotesters.

On Saturday, Trump condemned “the egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides,” sparking sharp criticism from Democrats, civil rights proponents and some Republicans for failing to single out and condemn the white supremacists who sparked the violence.

On Monday, Kenneth C. Frazier, CEO of Merck, said in a tweet that he was resigning from Trump's American Manufacturing Council, saying he was doing so “as a matter of personal

conscience” and that “America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy.”

Trump's remarks, which were not on his daily public schedule, appeared hastily arranged in a bid to move the White House past the backlash to his performance over the weekend. Yet before addressing the Charlottesville situation, Trump opened his remarks touting the economy, noting that stock markets are near record highs and the unemployment rate hovering at a 16-year low.

And though he condemned racism, Trump did not refer to the attack on the counterprotesters as “domestic terrorism,” even as Sessions said that it met the Justice Department's definition of such.

White House aides had defended Trump's initial response to the Charlottesville unrest by saying the president was focused on uniting the country against all violent clashes. The white supremacist groups — carrying Nazi and Confederate flags and, in some cases, armed with shields, batons and firearms permitted under Virginia's open carry laws — clashed with counterprotesters, some of whom fought back with pepper spray.

Yet Trump's critics, and even some of his Republican allies in Congress, expressed outrage that in failing to specifically condemn the racist groups, the president appeared to be emboldening them. Some criticized Trump's rhetoric during his campaign for inciting violence from his supporters, targeting immigrants and other minority groups.

“While today’s delayed words are welcome, they should have been spoken on Saturday,” Vanita Gupta, president of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, said in a statement. “This unconscionable delay has undermined his moral credibility as our nation’s leader.”

Trump attempted to counter such criticism Monday. “I've said many times that no matter the color of your skin, we all live under the same laws, we all salute the same great flag, and we are all made by the same almighty god,” he said. “We must love each other, show affection for each other and unite together in condemnation of this hatred, bigotry and violence.”

Trump called Heyer's death tragic and said it “fills us with grief, and we send her family our thoughts, our prayers and our love,” and he also praised the service of two Virginia state troopers, H. Jay Cullen and Berke Bates, who died Saturday during a helicopter crash while on duty monitoring the march.

“These three fallen Americans embody the goodness and decency of our nation,” Trump said. “In times such as these, America has always shown its true character. Responding to hate with love, division with unity and violence with an unwavering resolve for justice.”

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-signs-order-increasing-trade-pressure-on-china-1502740357>

Trump Signs Order Increasing Trade Pressure On China

By Jacob Schlesinger, 8/14/17

President Donald Trump took a step Monday in his effort to ramp up trade pressure on China, directing aides to explore the prospect of sanctioning Beijing for the “unfair” acquisition of American high technology.

The directive, signed in a ceremony in the White House’s Diplomatic Reception Room, was the first formal China trade action taken by a president who has long blasted the country for improperly aggressive commercial practices.

“The theft of intellectual property by foreign countries costs our nation millions of jobs and billions and billions of dollars each and every year,” Mr. Trump said. “For too long this wealth has been drained from our country while Washington has done nothing.”

While Mr. Trump’s tone was tough, the process he launched was measured. He specifically ordered his trade representative to begin a study into whether to launch a formal investigation about widespread complaints that Beijing forces multinationals to license valuable technology to

Chinese companies as the price of entry into China's markets. Aides said if the investigation does proceed, it could take a year before any decisions are made on imposing trade sanctions.

The move is part of a broader, complex diplomatic strategy of juggling Washington's competing policy goals with China, balancing the desire for more cooperation in controlling North Korea against a desire to curb the \$347 billion bilateral trade deficit.

Mr. Trump took the action three days after he spoke by phone with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and a few hours after China announced it would ban imports of North Korean coal, iron, and seafood, enforcing United Nations sanctions aimed at curbing Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons program.

Mr. Trump said the trade order would safeguard "the intellectual property that is vital to our security and to our prosperity." He also indicated, without elaborating, more such action to come, saying, as he signed the directive "this is just the beginning."

The Trump administration's deliberative approach drew criticism from Democrats, still smarting from Mr. Trump's successful inroads into their base of labor-union voters in the Rust Belt with his campaign vows to take a tougher line on trade.

"President Trump's pattern continues: Tough talk on China, but weaker action than anyone could ever imagine," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.), said in a statement. "To make an announcement that they're going to decide whether to have an investigation on China's well-documented theft of our intellectual property is another signal to China that it is OK to keep stealing."

Asked to respond to U.S. criticism of Beijing's treatment of foreign intellectual property, Chinese foreign-ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said "China has formulated and improved relevant laws and regulations ... and we have raised awareness of society as a whole about intellectual property rights protection." She added that she hoped the U.S. would recognize "China's progress in this respect."

In targeting Chinese intellectual-property practices, the Trump administration is picking up an issue that has become increasingly alarming to U.S. companies in recent years. They are worried in particular about the combination of China's explicit industrial policy seeking self-sufficiency in a range of tech sectors like robotics and semiconductors—articulated in its “Made in China 2025” initiative—along with a range of formal and informal requirements for foreign companies to share with Chinese partners proprietary material.

“This simply is not fair,” a senior administration official said in explaining the probe. U.S. firms “should not be forced or coerced to turn over the fruits of their labor,” the official added. “The current trajectory is unsustainable.”

The China investigation is one of several initiatives launched by the Trump administration aimed at reorienting U.S. trade policy. Mr. Trump has called for an overhaul of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which he has branded a “disaster” for U.S. workers. Talks with Mexico and Canada to rewrite that pact begin Wednesday.

“The Obstructionist Democrats have given us (or not fixed) some of the worst trade deals in World History,” Mr. Trump said in a Monday morning tweet. “I am changing that fast!”

The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-leadership/wp/2017/08/14/trump-fires-back-after-the-ceo-of-merck-resigned-from-his-manufacturing-council/>

Trump Fires Back After The CEO Of Merck Resigned From His Manufacturing Council

By Jena McGregor, 8/14/17

The chief executive of Merck said Monday in a tweet that he was resigning from President Trump's manufacturing council, saying he was doing so “as CEO of Merck and as a matter of personal conscience” and that “America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy, which run counter to the American ideal that all people are created equal.”

In the statement, Kenneth C. Frazier, one of the few African American CEOs in the Fortune 500, said, "I feel a responsibility to take a stand against intolerance and extremism" and touted the power of diversity. "Our country's strength stems from its diversity and the contributions made by men and women of different faiths, races, sexual orientations and political beliefs."

Within an hour after the statement was first issued, Trump tweeted his initial response. "Now that Ken Frazier of Merck Pharma has resigned from President's Manufacturing Council, he will have more time to LOWER RIPOFF DRUG PRICES!"

Frazier's resignation followed an outcry by critics about how President Trump had responded to protests over the weekend in Charlottesville that were led by white supremacist groups and turned violent. Many questioned why Trump had not explicitly named neo-Nazi, Ku Klux Klan or white nationalist groups when he said "we condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides," repeating "on many sides" for emphasis.

By midday Monday, after a weekend of mounting criticism, Trump made a statement in which he denounced the groups. In brief remarks to reporters in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, he said that "racism is evil and those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups that are repugnant to everything we hold dear as Americans" and "we are equal under the law and we are equal under our Constitution." He said that "anyone who acted criminally in this weekend's racist violence, you will be held fully accountable."

A spokesman for Merck said the company had no further comment about Frazier's decision, his tweet or the president's response. The White House press office did not immediately respond earlier Monday to a request for comment.

On Saturday afternoon, following the eruption of violence in Charlottesville that morning, Trump first made a general statement about the violence, tweeting: "We ALL must be united & condemn all that hate stands for. There is no place for this kind of violence in America. Lets come together as one!" Later Saturday, he read a statement that included his condemnation of "hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides." Critics, including Republicans in his own party, said he should directly condemn the groups by name.

Trump's swift response — and his willingness to go after an American CEO but not initially name white supremacists in Charlottesville — was noted by a number of observers Monday on social media.

Frazier is not the first corporate chieftain to resign in protest from one of the president's advisory councils. In June, following the president's announcement that he planned to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement, both Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Disney CEO Robert Iger resigned from White House advisory councils.

Lowering drug prices was a major campaign promise for Trump, and throughout the early part of the year, the president made threatening and vague statements about the prices of drugs being too high. In the midst of one of the drug industry's biggest conferences in January, Trump accused the pharmaceutical industry of "getting away with murder," fueling speculation that he might take action on drug prices that the industry has long fought — such as allowing the government to bid on drugs in the Medicare program.

During a meeting of pharmaceutical company leaders at the White House, President Trump said that while there have been many successes in drug development, the pricing has been "astronomical" and must come down. (Reuters)

But in the intervening months, industry leaders have grown increasingly confident that any governmental actions won't harm their business models. Pharmaceutical chief executives, including Frazier, met with Trump in January and came away from the meeting with the impression that they would not face a serious effort from the White House to lower drug prices through government negotiation on Medicare drug prices.

Key leaders from across government have been meeting to discuss the issue of pricing, but based on leaked documents that have been circulating, including a potential draft executive order on drug pricing, Wall Street analysts have noted that some of the actions being proposed could actually help the pharmaceutical industry.

Politico

Obama Team Was Warned In 2014 About Russian Interference

By Ali Watkins, 8/14/17

The Obama administration received multiple warnings from national security officials between 2014 and 2016 that the Kremlin was ramping up its intelligence operations and building disinformation networks it could use to disrupt the U.S. political system, according to more than half a dozen current and former officials.

As early as 2014, the administration received a report that quoted a well-connected Russian source as saying that the Kremlin was building a disinformation arm that could be used to interfere in Western democracies. The report, according to an official familiar with it, included a quote from the Russian source telling U.S. officials in Moscow, "You have no idea how extensive these networks are in Europe ... and in the U.S., Russia has penetrated media organizations, lobbying firms, political parties, governments and militaries in all of these places."

That report was circulated among the National Security Council, intelligence agencies and the State Department via secure email and cable in the spring of 2014 as part of a larger assessment of Russian intentions in Ukraine, the official said.

There was no explicit warning of a threat to U.S. elections, but the official said some diplomats and national security officials in Moscow felt the administration was too quick to dismiss the possibility that the Kremlin incursions could reach the United States.

"Even if the Russians and [Russian President Vladimir] Putin had these ambitions, they were doubtful of their capacity to execute them," the official said of the Obama administration.

Former White House officials, requesting anonymity to discuss intelligence reporting, confirmed that the administration began receiving increased traffic in 2014 about Russian disinformation and covert influence in campaigns, but said they did not recall receiving that specific warning about Russian inroads in the United States.

Ned Price, a former spokesperson for the National Security Council, rejected the idea that the administration failed to heed warnings about Russian interference in the U.S. political system or Russian cyberespionage in general.

“The Obama administration was nothing but proactive in responding to Russian aggression in all of its forms, especially as Moscow became more brazen with and following its military moves against Ukraine beginning in 2014,” Price said, citing sanctions and increased American support to NATO as evidence of the former administration’s seriousness.

But subsequent events — including Russia’s interference in the American election through hacks of the emails of the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton campaign Chairman John Podesta, among other intrusions identified by U.S. intelligence — have left many in the former administration wondering whether they could have done more.

“People have criticized us ... for not coming out more forcefully and saying it,” former CIA Director John Brennan said at the Aspen National Forum in July. “There was no playbook for this.”

On Oct. 7, 2016, about a month before the election, the administration revealed, through a statement from the director of national intelligence and the Department of Homeland Security, that the U.S. government believed Russia was behind the hacks and was seeking to interfere with the election. The revelation, which many in the White House expected to be bombshell news, was largely overshadowed by the revelation that same day of an “Access Hollywood” tape in which Donald Trump made crude and sexist comments to anchor Billy Bush.

But others in the national security community say an overly cautious Obama White House could have done more both during the campaign and in the previous months and years to alert Russia that it was aware of its intentions to subvert the U.S. democracy — along with those of some other Western countries — and would retaliate forcefully at the first sign of Russian interference.

POLITICO spoke with more than a dozen current and former officials from across the national security spectrum, including intelligence agencies, the State Department and the Pentagon.

Almost all said they were aware of Russia's aggressive cyberespionage and disinformation campaigns — especially after the dramatic Russian attempt to hack Ukrainian elections in 2014 — but felt that either the White House or key agencies were unwilling to act forcefully to counter the Russian actions.

Intelligence officials "had a list of things they could never get the signoffs on," one intelligence official said. "The truth is, nobody wanted to piss off the Russians."

Among the strategies put forward prior to the 2016 election were closing two Russian dachas in Maryland and New York, which were long suspected of being Russian intelligence sites, expelling diplomats and engaging in counterintelligence operations that would alert Putin to the United States' determination to strike back against any attempts at interference in the U.S. political system.

Officials outside the White House blamed micromanagement by the National Security Council for the lack of a more forceful response, while a former NSC official says any failure to act forcefully against Russia was because of concerns by the State Department and, less frequently, the Defense Department about potential retaliation by Moscow.

"The frustrations [about lack of forceful action] are justified and, frankly, were shared by the White House," said the former official, who requested anonymity due to this person's continuing work in Russia.

"The options were being discussed. They weren't being implemented," the former official added.

The State Department and Pentagon often objected to harsher measures endorsed by the intelligence community, one official said, a difference in perspective that some attributed to the fact that diplomatic staff and defense attaches were obvious targets of retaliation, rather than intelligence officers who usually work undercover.

Concerns about Russian cyberespionage and election meddling largely grew out of the events following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, followed by an aggressive Russian

effort to influence the Ukrainian presidential election that May.

A Russia-backed cyberattack against Ukraine's voting infrastructure during the May election was thwarted at the 11th hour. The cyberintrusions — which in some cases could have changed voter tallies — were discovered just hours before what could have been catastrophic outcomes.

“The reports from sources deep inside the Russian government were alarming,” one current U.S. official who served under the Obama administration said. “We started getting stuff in April, May [of 2014] that was extraordinary about the extent of the threat and the capacities the Russians were building.”

“We were worried [Putin] would try to test us,” recalled a former Obama administration official.

The Ukraine crisis — coupled with the Kremlin's embrace of National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, who continues to be granted asylum by Moscow — was a sobering moment for the White House, one recently departed intelligence officer and the current administration official said.

Yet the administration still was reluctant to engage in more forceful counterintelligence strategies against the Kremlin, including more aggressively tracking and tailing Russian operatives within the United States, according to five of the officials who spoke to POLITICO.

Those outside the White House said they received frustrating mixed messages: The White House would subsequently dismiss Moscow's capabilities while also citing fear of an escalation with Putin.

Price, the former NSC spokesman, denied those claims.

“We responded with the same clarity of purpose following Moscow’s aggression against U.S. officials in Russia and, of course, in the face of the Kremlin’s attempt to undermine the integrity of our electoral process,” he said.

But several senior intelligence and administration officials recall it differently.

“It just seemed like it was difficult, especially after the Crimea and the Ukraine ... there still wasn’t a willingness to more heartily engage in the effort,” the former intelligence officer said.

In one particularly frustrating instance, officials said, they reiterated a longstanding desire to shut down the two Russian dachas in Maryland and New York. Amid escalating tensions, it was often presented as a way to send a message to Moscow.

“For quite some time, it was an active option. Secretary Kerry refused to consider it,” the former NSC official said. “We were getting pushback from the head of the agency being harassed. That was a constant frustration.”

Former Secretary of State John Kerry was overseas and unavailable for comment. But a former senior State Department official, speaking as a representative of Kerry, saw it differently. “Kerry agreed to shut down the dachas, but had not settled on the timing,” the official said.

Tensions finally reached a fever pitch in the summer of 2016. Just days before Russian operatives began releasing troves of stolen DNC emails, a CIA officer under official diplomatic cover was brutally beaten outside the U.S. embassy in Moscow. The officer managed to slip to safety inside the door of the U.S. compound but was immediately evacuated for medical care.

U.S. intelligence and law enforcement officials worked frantically to compile retaliatory options for the Obama White House. Despite being presented with several strategies — including more aggressively tailing Russian diplomats in the U.S. — it opted to do nothing immediately.

“There was some real anger,” the former intelligence officer said. “We weren’t going to mug anybody, but we could at least be more overt in our coverages. We could expel some people, we could do more overt surveillance on people.”

Another former intelligence official put it this way: “The longer we don’t push back, the harder they push.”

Even after the release of emails designed to damage Clinton’s campaign, the White House was reluctant to respond, something that several recently departed Obama-era officials have lamented.

After compiling a list of potential retaliatory options in the summer of 2016 — including kicking out more than 100 Russian diplomats, one official told POLITICO — the pushback from national security agencies was so great and varied, the NSC official said, that for months nothing was done.

“Any of these actions risked a Russian reciprocation,” the former NSC official said. “We were kind of caught in a catch-22.”

After the election, in December, the White House finally announced the expulsion of 35 diplomats and ordered the Kremlin officials out of the two Russian-owned dachas.

But in a further indication of the tensions within the Obama team, Kerry rejected suggestions that he personally break the news of the expulsions and closing of the dachas to Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, the former NSC official said. Instead, the job was left to Pat Kennedy, one of Kerry’s undersecretaries.

The former State Department official, speaking for Kerry, said the option of having Kerry communicate the expulsions and closing of the dachas to Lavrov was never discussed. But the former NSC official was unmoved.

“The idea of having Kerry doing it with Lavrov was raised several times and he didn’t want to do it,” the NSC official said.

The expulsions and closing of the dachas were symbolic moves that stung the Kremlin, but for many intelligence officers, it was too little, too late.

While some Obama White House officials privately concede that they, too, wish there had been a more forceful response, others stand by the decisions that were made.

“People at the working level don’t necessarily understand” the full scope of policy implications, one former White House official said.

Now, to the further frustration of some intelligence officers, there is little indication that, for all Trump’s bluster, he’ll be tougher on the Kremlin. In his first months in office, the president has signaled a willingness to work with Moscow on several fronts, and has pushed back hard against his own intelligence community’s assessment that Russia actively worked to elect him to the presidency.

It’s a bitter pill for many who see Trump’s election as the avoidable outcome of years’ worth of counterintelligence failings against Russia.

“They were warned. They underestimated it until it was too late,” the current administration official said of the Obama White House and Russia, with a tinge of bitterness. “They just didn’t know how to deal with the bad guys.”

Michael Abboud

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Tue 2/6/2018 11:21:49 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses: INSIDE the government shutdown strategy -- SCHMIDT and HABERMAN: Trump's lawyers want him to refuse Mueller interview -- GARRETT GRAFF says MUELLER much farther along than anyone knows

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses

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Driving the Day

Good Tuesday morning. GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN INTEL YOU CAN USE ... THE GOVERNMENT shuts down the day after tomorrow. Neither chamber has passed a bill, and House Democrats plan to leave town tomorrow for their retreat on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. It's remarkable how Washington keeps the government of the world's largest economy running on four-week intervals. Anyway ...

-- **THE HOUSE** is going to vote on a bill today to fund the government until March 23, while funding community health centers for two years and boosting defense spending for the full year. **THIS WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY PASS THE HOUSE**, because the House Freedom Caucus -- which vowed to vote against more stopgap bills -- will support it.

-- **THE SENATE** won't much care about the House bill. At the same time, though, the Senate is voting to move onto a separate full-year defense spending bill -- something the House requested during the last government shutdown fight. **PUT SUCCINCTLY:** Congress is really nowhere in staving off a government shutdown at the moment. The two chambers are, again, at loggerheads.

-- **WHAT TO WATCH FOR:** The Senate is going to change whatever the House sends them. **BEST CASE SCENARIO FOR REPUBLICANS:** The Senate will couple the bill to avoid a shutdown with a big-time deal to boost spending levels -- known as a "caps deal" -- and a disaster spending bill. The strategy is still in flux, but this move would, theoretically, make the stopgap spending bill somewhat attractive to both parties, and could help move Washington toward a yearlong spending deal. **SMALL-BORE STRATEGY:** The Senate simply rips out the House's full year of defense funding, and sends it back to Speaker Paul Ryan, leaving it up to him to avoid a shutdown.

-- LINGERING QUESTION: Can Congress squeeze something through that allows Democrats to bounce to the Eastern Shore? Seems unlikely that their trip won't be disrupted in some way. A government shutdown does not seem likely at this point. Expect a small dose of panic. That being said, it's not entirely certain Washington doesn't stumble into a second shutdown this year.

BARELY REGISTERING A BLIP -- The debt limit needs to be lifted by early next month. Hardly anyone is talking about this.

STORY OF THE DAY -- MIKE SCHMIDT and MAGGIE HABERMAN on NYT A1: **"Trump's Lawyers Want Him to Refuse an Interview in Russia Inquiry":** "His lawyers are concerned that the president, who has a history of making false statements and contradicting himself, could be charged with lying to investigators. Their stance puts them at odds with Mr. Trump, who has said publicly and privately that he is eager to speak with Mr. Mueller as part of the investigation into possible ties between his associates and Russia's election interference, and whether he obstructed justice.

"Mr. Trump's decision about whether to speak to prosecutors , expected in the coming weeks, will shape one of the most consequential moments of the investigation. Refusing to sit for an interview opens the possibility that Mr. Mueller will subpoena the president to testify before a grand jury, setting up a court fight that would drastically escalate the investigation and could be decided by the Supreme Court."

<http://nyti.ms/2EpCtVH>

WOWZA -- GARRETT GRAFF in Wired, "Bob Mueller's Investigation is Larger - and Farther Along - Than You Think": "We speak about the 'Mueller probe' as a single entity, but it's important to understand that there are no fewer than five (known) separate investigations under the broad umbrella of the special counsel's office ... it's important to understand the different 'buckets' of Mueller's probe. ... 1. Preexisting Business Deals and Money Laundering. ... 2. Russian Information Operations. ... 3. Active Cyber Intrusions. ... 4. Russian Campaign Contacts. ... 5. Obstruction of Justice. ...

"We also know there's significant relevant evidence that's not yet public: Both [Michael] Flynn and [George] Papadopoulos traded cooperation and information as part of their respective plea deals, and none of the information that they provided has become public yet. ... All of these pieces of public evidence, the 'known knowns,' point to one conclusion: Bob Mueller has a busy few weeks ahead of him-and the sturm und drang of the last week will likely only intensify as more of the investigation comes into public view." <http://bit.ly/2E7TjJe>

MORE MEMO FALLOUT -- "The Times Asks Court to Unseal Documents on Surveillance of Carter Page," by NYT's Charlie Savage and Adam Goldman: "The New York Times is asking the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to unseal secret documents related to the wiretapping of Carter Page, the onetime Trump campaign

adviser at the center of a disputed memo written by Republican staffers on the House Intelligence Committee. The motion is unusual. No such wiretapping application materials apparently have become public since Congress first enacted the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act in 1978." <http://nyti.ms/2C230De>

-- **"Republicans concede key FBI 'footnote' in Carter Page warrant,"** by Kyle Cheney: "Republican leaders are acknowledging that the FBI disclosed the political origins of a private dossier the bureau cited in an application to surveil former Trump campaign adviser Carter Page, undermining a controversial GOP memo released Friday and fueling Democratic demands to declassify more information about the bureau's actions. At issue is whether the federal probe into the Trump campaign's Russia ties is infected with political bias, as Republicans say - or whether the GOP is using deceitful tactics to quash the probe, as Democrats insist.

"Democrats pounced on public comments over the past day by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) and intelligence committee member Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.), arguing that the GOP memo's failure to mention a key footnote in the FBI application shows how the party has cherry-picked classified facts to protect President Donald Trump." <http://politi.co/2BWPccR>

-- **CNN'S KARA SCANNELL and "MOSCOW" MANU RAJU: "Source: Bannon not expected to appear before House Intel Tuesday despite subpoena":** "Former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon is not expected to appear before the House Intelligence Committee Tuesday, risking being held in contempt for failing to comply with a subpoena, according to a source close to the process.

"Escalating a tense standoff with the panel, Bannon isn't planning on showing up because the White House and committee haven't reached an agreement over the scope of the questioning, the source said." <http://cnn.it/2BZ8nmu>

TRUMP ANTI-FBI, DOJ MESSAGING WORKING -- "Most Republicans believe FBI, Justice Dept. trying to 'delegitimize' Trump: Reuters/Ipsos poll," by Reuters' Chris Kahn: "Nearly three out of four Republicans believe the FBI and Justice Department are trying to undermine U.S. President Donald Trump, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll released on Monday, a sharp turn for a party that has historically been a strong backer of law enforcement agencies. Overall, most of the public still believes that Trump or someone from his campaign worked with Russia to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election, allegations that Moscow and Trump have repeatedly denied." <http://reut.rs/2BGjXr5>

***** **A message from Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses:** Small businesses power the economy and generate widespread job growth. That is why Goldman Sachs is hosting the *10,000 Small Businesses Summit* in Washington, DC. Learn how we can #MakeSmallBig on February 13 and 14: GS.com/10KSBSummit *****

GOOD SCOOP -- WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE ... -- "White House Official Called

Trump 'a Deplorable,'" by NYMag's Olivia Nuzzi: "Before joining the Trump administration, the White House principal deputy press secretary, Raj Shah, called President Donald Trump 'a deplorable' and referred to the release of the Access Hollywood tape as 'some justice,' according to private messages independently obtained and verified by New York. Shah, who worked at the [RNC] during the 2016 election, also asked an RNC colleague [Andy Hemming] to dig up an old video clip of Trump that shortly afterward showed up in a Jeb Bush commercial. ... The communications obtained by New York provide a window into the complex drama of the Trump White House, where the operatives who serve at the pleasure of the outsider president have in the past expressed contempt for him - and sometimes still do." <http://nym.ag/2sd3fLN>

-- PLAYBOOK TRUTH BOMB: Of course this is really embarrassing for Raj. But most people in and around politics know that many of the people who work for Trump have dogged him even worse than this. Spend a day on Capitol Hill and you'll hear Republican elected officials who publicly say they adore Trump spit unthinkable invective off the record.

WHAT KELLYANNE'S BEEN UP TO -- "Kellyanne Conway's 'opioid cabinet' sidelines drug czar's experts," by Brianna Ehley and Sarah Karlin-Smith: "President Donald Trump's war on opioids is beginning to look more like a war on his drug policy office. White House counselor Kellyanne Conway has taken control of the opioids agenda, quietly freezing out drug policy professionals and relying instead on political staff to address a lethal crisis claiming about 175 lives a day. The main response so far has been to call for a border wall and to promise a 'just say no' campaign. ...

"The office's acting director, Rich Baum, who had served in the office for decades before Trump tapped him as the temporary leader, has not been invited to Conway's opioid cabinet meetings, according to his close associates. His schedule, obtained under a Freedom of Information Act request, included no mention of the meetings. Two political appointees from Baum's office, neither of whom are drug policy experts, attend on the office's behalf, alongside officials from across the federal government, from HHS to Defense. A White House spokesperson declined to disclose who attends the meetings, and Baum did not respond to a request for comment, although the White House later forwarded an email in which Baum stressed the office's central role in developing national drug strategy." <http://politi.co/2nOTNZB>

BEN WHITE -- "'The president clearly set himself up': Trump's stock market miscalculation": "President Donald Trump is learning a basic and painful lesson of Wall Street: Stocks also go down. A global market sell-off accelerated Monday with the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunging nearly 1,600 points at one point in roller-coaster afternoon trading. After a volatile session, the Dow ended down 1,175 points, or 4.6%, at 24,346. It was the largest ever single-day point drop for the Dow and it rattled both Wall Street and Washington, abruptly ending a remarkable period of placid markets where it often seemed the only direction was up. A young generation of Wall Street traders has never seen the kind of whipsaw action that seized markets Monday."

<http://politi.co/2EH47Lj>

-- DAY AHEAD... DIP SPREADS TO EUROPE -- FT, by Michael Hunter and Alex Samson in London and Emma Dunkley in Kuala Lumpur: "A rout swept through European and Asian stock markets in the wake of the biggest sell-off on Wall Street in six years as a sudden burst of turmoil shattered the long period of calm. ...

"European bourses followed suit in early trading and were on track for their worst day since the aftermath of Britain's vote in 2016 to leave the EU. London's FTSE 100 lost 3.5 per cent in opening trade, with every constituent falling and financial stocks hit hardest at the sector level. The Europe-wide Stoxx 600 fell 2.2 per cent, while Frankfurt's Xetra Dax 30 was down by 3.5 per cent." <http://on.ft.com/2BIEI13>

VP MIKE PENCE did not rule out a meeting with North Korea during a stop in Alaska on his way to the Olympics. Per pooler Ashley Parker of the Washington Post, Pence said he had "not requested a meeting, but we'll see what happens."

-- ON WHETHER HE'LL ENGAGE WITH NORTH KOREA: "Let me say President Trump has said he always believes in talking, but I haven't requested any meeting. But we'll see what happens. But my message, whatever the setting, whoever is present, will be the same. And that is that North Korea must once and for all abandon its nuclear weapons program and ballistic missile ambitions and it must accede to the wishes not only of nations across the region and the United States, but nations across the world, to really abandon those ambitions and enter the family of nations. North Korea can have a better future than the militaristic path, the path of provocation and confrontation that it's on. Better for its own people, better for the region, and better for peace."

TOUGH TALK ON DEMS MESSAGE PROBLEM -- ISAAC DOVERE talks with **REP. JOE KENNEDY (D-MASS.)** in the latest "Off Message" Podcast: "Democrats are really good at finding some smart people that can run some regressions and say, 'Here's what the analysis is on X,'" Kennedy said. "What you need to do is to match that policy with a message that people can understand, and a messenger who has credibility with the people we seek to actually persuade to vote for us." <http://politi.co/2E7O2kL>

THE GOP'S FIREWALL -- "Sound the alarm: National GOP breaks glass in Pennsylvania race," by Alex Isenstadt in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania: "The day after Conor Lamb won the Democratic nomination to run in this very pro-Donald Trump House district, Republican strategist Corry Bliss knew his party had another special election problem on its hands. Bliss, who heads the main super PAC for House Republicans, arrived at his office at 6:30 a.m. and played an internet clip of Lamb, a telegenic 33-year-old former federal prosecutor and Marine veteran, speaking at a Democratic gathering.

"Then Bliss pulled up a video on social media of the Republican candidate he was tasked with helping, 59-year-old state legislator Rick Saccone. 'I realized this would be a race,' Bliss said. Since that November morning, the Republican Party has launched a

massive campaign to save a House seat here in the heart of Trump country. A loss in the March 13 contest - coming just months after the party's embarrassing defeat in the Alabama Senate race - would portend a potential blowout in the November midterms." <http://politi.co/2BH4Ddw>

-- **NEW TAX AD:** The American Action Network -- part of the a cluster of House GOP leadership-backed outside groups -- is launching a digital ad in 36 districts touting the benefits of tax reform. ***The 30-second spot*** <http://bit.ly/2BImCk7>

JESSE FERGUSON SOUNDS THE ALARM in USA TODAY: "Will Democrats have the money to win Congress? The Kochs are making me nervous: If you don't think money matters, you're wrong. We may have the advantage in enthusiasm, but Republicans will try to buy a ground game to match it": "Money won't determine the fundamentals of the cycle. It won't transform an overwhelming loss into an overwhelming win. You can't buy a wave. But it can make a difference - a big one. In a cycle like this, I believe it's the difference that could either end Republican control of the House on a close night, or limit our gains if the wind is really at our backs." <https://usat.ly/2FSbHlx>

TRUMP'S TUESDAY -- In the afternoon, the president will host a law enforcement roundtable focused on MS-13. He will also sign the National Security Presidential Memorandum establishing the National Vetting Center.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump return to the White House after a trip to Ohio on Feb. 5. | Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

FOR THE RECORD -- UPDATE ON TRUMP'S BIPARTISAN PUSH ... Democrats are treasonous for not applauding him much during the State of the Union, he said. <http://politi.co/2nGVN7g>

CARLA MARINUCCI in San Francisco -- "California gubernatorial front-runner addresses past scandal": "Democrat Gavin Newsom, the front-runner in California's governor's race, said Monday that he 'learned an enormous amount' from his past omission of sexual transgressions while mayor of San Francisco more than a decade ago, saying, 'I applaud women for coming forward' in as part of the #MeToo movement.

"Newsom, considered a rising star in the Democratic Party, was questioned about his past scandal at a forum sponsored by POLITICO and the University of San Francisco's McCarthy for Public Service. He spoke in the greatest detail yet about bombshell revelations that erupted when he was the mayor of San Francisco and nearly

derailed his career. ...

"I acknowledged it. I apologized for it. I learned an enormous amount from it,' Newsom said Monday. 'We were very open and honest about it. ... And I am, every day, trying to be a champion and a model' for not only girls, but young boys as the society tries to 'get to the roots causes.' The #MeToo movement represents 'a profound opportunity to address deeper issues,' he said, adding: 'It's not a political movement, it's a cultural movement.'" <http://politi.co/2BXTyk9>

HARASSMENT FILES -- "Steve Wynn Set Up LLC to Pay His Accuser," by WSJ's Kate O'Keeffe: "Steve Wynn and his legal representatives set up a company separate from his Wynn Resorts Ltd., according to public records, that helped conceal a \$7.5 million payment to a woman who had accused the casino mogul of forcing her to have sex. The limited-liability company, called Entity Y, was created in 2005, Nevada records show, after a manicurist at Mr. Wynn's flagship Wynn Las Vegas casino-resort made the accusation, according to people familiar with the matter.

"Entity Y was created solely as a vehicle to handle the settlement funds, a Wynn Resorts lawyer confirmed to a judge in a hearing in October, according to a court transcript. That hearing was part of continuing litigation between Mr. Wynn and his ex-wife, Elaine, over her bid to lift restrictions on the sale of her stock in Wynn Resorts. Mr. Wynn used his personal funds for the settlement, his lawyers said in an earlier court filing in that case." <http://on.wsj.com/2s6Qu5m>

***** **A message from Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses:** Small businesses comprise 99% of U.S. employer firms and create 63% of net new jobs in America. That is why Goldman Sachs is hosting the *10,000 Small Businesses Summit* in Washington, DC. The event will focus on charting a path to help small business owners grow and compete successfully. Learn how we can #MakeSmallBig on February 13 and 14: GS.com/10KSBSummit *****

KFILE -- "Trump ambassador nominee promoted fringe conspiracy theories on Twitter," by CNN's Nathan McDermott and Andrew Kaczynski: "President Donald Trump's nominee to be the ambassador to Barbados and several other Caribbean countries spread fringe conspiracy theories and unfounded attacks about Trump's political opponents on Twitter, including ones about Sen. Ted Cruz and his wife, Heidi, during the 2016 presidential election. Trump in January nominated Leandro Rizzuto Jr., a senior executive at Conair, to be the next ambassador to Barbados, as well as to serve concurrently as ambassador to Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

"His nomination requires Senate confirmation. During the height of the Republican presidential primary, Rizzuto spread smears about Trump's opponents, including Cruz, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, and Ohio Gov. John Kasich, a CNN KFile review of Rizzuto's Twitter account shows." <http://cnn.it/2nFyACi>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Chaos at Newsweek: Top editors suddenly out," by CNN's Hadas Gold: "Employees at Newsweek have been told that editor-in-chief Bob Roe and executive editor Ken Li have been fired, sources with knowledge of the situation told CNN. A reporter, Celeste Katz, who had written articles about financial issues at the magazine as well as an investigation by the Manhattan District Attorney's office into its parent company, Newsweek Media Group, was also let go ... Staff in Newsweek's New York offices were told they could stop working and go home for the day on Monday afternoon. ... Senior writer Matthew Cooper tendered his resignation on Monday as a result of the chaos, saying in a resignation letter obtained by CNN that he has never 'seen more reckless leadership.'" <http://cnmmon.ie/2FSbEXd>

-- **ONE OF THE GREAT FEATURES** of the old Newsweek: the special election project. A group of reporters and writers -- people like Howard Fineman and Evan Thomas -- reported on the election on an embargoed basis. And then after the election, Newsweek would release a massive behind-the-scenes tick tock. ***A bit from the 2008 project***
<http://bit.ly/2BZdAu0>

Playbookers

SPOTTED yesterday on the 2 p.m. BOS to DCA shuttle: Sens. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.).

REMEMBERING SEAN MURPHY -- "Cole's Chief of Staff Dies Suddenly," by Roll Call's Alex Gangitano: "Rep. Tom Cole announced Monday the death of his longtime chief of staff, Sean Murphy. The Oklahoma Republican put out a statement saying Murphy died suddenly of natural causes. 'He was a wise counselor, a good friend and a generous mentor to dozens of people who have worked in my congressional office and my political campaigns. He will be missed by all who knew him, but especially me,' the congressman said. Murphy is survived by his wife and three children. He worked as Cole's chief of staff for over 11 years and previously as chief of staff for four years to former Colorado Republican Rep. Bob Beauprez." <http://bit.ly/2BboPDw>

OUT AND ABOUT -- Ambassador Elizabeth Frawley Bagley hosted a book party last night at her Georgetown house for Lanny Davis' "The Unmaking of the President 2016: How FBI Director James Comey Cost Hillary Clinton the Presidency." During the Q&A, someone in the audience asked Davis if the election could be reversed and Clinton put into office, Clinton, who attended the party and took photos with party-goers, shook her head. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2E5SJYt> ... <http://bit.ly/2BFGuEc> ... **\$16.51 on Amazon**
<http://amzn.to/2nGboUi>

SPOTTED: Sidney Blumenthal, Al From, Nick Merrill, Adam Parkhomenko, Dave Weigel, Jim Sciutto, Jonathan Swan, Judy Kurtz, Katie Benner, Kevin Cirilli, Josh Gerstein, Bob Barnett and Rita Braver, Bob Costa, Carl Cannon, Alexi McCammond,

Alicia Mundy, Bob Cusack, Carol Joynt, Ben Brody, Chris and Kathleen Matthews, former Amb. Tom Siebert, Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), Allida Black, Josh Galper, Adam Goldberg, Eleanor and Michael McManus, Emily Miller, Stephanie Schriock and Monica Healy.

- Pool report: "The Heritage Foundation officially welcomed Kay Coles James as its new president and honored founder and former president Ed Feulner on Monday night. In her remarks to more than 300 guests, James said, 'We will open the hearts and minds and doors of the millions of Americans who really are conservative but just don't know it yet.' ... Feulner said: 'Kay, we want to welcome you as president of what we modestly call the most important think tank in the most important city in the most important country in the world.'" **Video:** <http://bit.ly/2E44FxD> ... **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2BcXiRZ>

SPOTTED: Attorney General Jeff Sessions, HUD Secretary Ben Carson, Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Ed Meese, Paul Teller, Jay Timmons, Penny Nance, Morton Blackwell, Roger Ream, Tracie Sharp, Adam Meyerson, Paris Dennard, Tim Carney, Matt Continetti, Tevi Troy, Ken Weinstein, Tim Carney, Gene Meyer, Matt Spalding, Eli Lehrer, Jen Marshall, Matt Continetti, Mike Franc and David McIntosh.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Jerry Seib, executive Washington editor at The Wall Street Journal, is 62. **How he got his start in journalism:** "Well, I delivered the Hays, Kansas, Daily News as a paper boy, which I suppose represents a start of some kind. More to the point, in college I worked at the Phillips County Review, the Salina Journal and the Wichita Eagle in Kansas as an intern before landing an internship at the Wall Street Journal's Dallas bureau." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2E5krbN>

BIRTHDAYS: Tom Brokaw is 78 ... ABC's Amy Robach is 45 ... Ronald Reagan was born 107 years ago in Tampico, Ill. ... The Daily Beast's Lloyd Grove ... Fernando Suarez, CBS News transportation producer, is 39 ... Aoife McCarthy ... Rebecca Cooper, founder and CEO of Capital Insights ... WaPo political reporter Jenna Johnson ... David Brown, executive producer for WNET's "MetroFocus," is 51 ... Annie Burns, partner at GMMB (h/t Jon Haber) ... Eric Weiner, columnist for BBC Travel and author of "The Geography of Genius" ... Doug Campbell ... C. Boyden Gray ... Chris Slevin, LD for Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) ... Daniel Wessel, spokesperson and deputy Trump War Room director at the DNC, and his twin brother Evan, deputy director of the National Conference of Democratic Mayors (h/ts Michael) ... Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-N.J.) is 73 ... Rep. Brendan Boyle (D-Penn.) is 41 (h/t John McCarthy) ...

... **Ken Lisaius**, Bush alum now SVP of comms. at BIO ... Alexa Cassanos, corporate comms at GE and a Facebook and New Yorker alum (h/t Deirdre Latour) ... Jacquie Bloom (h/t Tammy Haddad) ... DSCC's Missayr Boker, a NARAL alum (h/t James Owens) ... EnergyWire reporter Mike Soraghan ... WaPo syndicated columnist Richard Cohen is 77 ... Jay Dardenne is 64 (h/ts Jewish Insider) ... Jessica Mulligan, government relations manager at the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition ... RNC's Sarah

Wood ... Ray Conger, GPG alum now an MBA candidate at NYU Stern ... Justin Pope, AP alum now VP and chief of staff at Longwood University, is 43 ... Scott Atran is 66 ... Rob Johnson ... Helaine Klasky, VP and chair of the public affairs and crisis practice at Burson-Marsteller and a Californian at heart (h/t Ben Chang) ... Mark J. McGarry is 6-0 ... Mike Schmuhl, principal at Clashmore ... Brit Grant ... Dick Seifman ... Peter Stolz is 36 ... Uber's Malcolm Glenn ... Peter Lutrario ... Allison Plummer ... Jeff Anderson ... Clay Helton ... Tommy Brown ... Patrick Urbanus ... Ricky Feller ... John Flannery ... Doug Campbell (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs

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Driving the Day

EARLY AND OFTEN -- SENATE MAJORITY PAC, the Senate Democratic super PAC, dropped \$2.5 million on ads boosting Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) and Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.).

LUNCH WITH THE FT -- "Trump confidant Chris Ruddy on the president's 'inner Democrat'" <http://on.ft.com/2Fm7daA>

Good Saturday morning. President Donald Trump is at Trump International Golf Course this morning in West Palm Beach, Florida, according to a pool report.

HMM ... TRUMP WHIPS AGAINST NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TUNNEL, via WaPo's Mike DeBonis and Josh Dawsey: "Trump personally appealed to House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) this week to target federal funding for the \$30 billion Gateway project, which would construct a tunnel into New York's Penn Station to supplement two aging tubes that are at risk of failing in the coming years. ...

"Trump delivered his message to Ryan on Wednesday during a meeting at the Capitol, three people familiar with the conversation said. ... The motivations behind Trump's opposition are not entirely clear. It is a direct challenge to a key political rival, Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.), who has been among the most powerful and vocal backers of federal funding for the project. Until recently, Schumer had held up several Trump nominees, including his pick to head the Federal Railroad Administration, to protest the administration's failure to support the project."
<http://wapo.st/2tdcso3>

THE BIG PICTURE -- JOHN HARRIS and ANDREW RESTUCCIA: "Demoralized

West Wing stokes fears over Trump's capacity to handle a crisis": "Chaos here, backlash there, shock everywhere. And in Washington and around the globe another gasping chorus of WTF commentary: reckless, not normal, reality show run amok. And so on, et cetera, et cetera, for the one-hundredth-and-can't-remember time of the Trump Era.

"But there is something different about this week's spasm of sudden policy lurches, graceless personal insults, oozing scandal news, and ceaseless West Wing knife fights. It is the starkest example to date of President Donald Trump's executive style looking untenable not merely from the outside - from the perspective of establishment politicians and media analysts - but from the inside, too.

"Administration officials and outsiders with windows into decision-making describe a growing sense of despair within Trump's ranks, driven by the mounting realization that the president's brand of politics guided by intuition and improvisation is incompatible with a competently functioning executive branch. Most alarming, by these lights, is mounting evidence that Trump lacks an attribute possessed by most previous presidents and certainly by all the most successful ones: a capacity for self-critique and self-correction." <http://politi.co/2F99HcX>

HOW DID WE GET HERE? -- "Trump was angry and 'unglued' when he started a trade war, officials say," by NBC News' Stephanie Ruhle and Peter Alexander: "According to two officials, Trump's decision to launch a potential trade war was born out of anger at other simmering issues and the result of a broken internal process that has failed to deliver him consensus views that represent the best advice of his team. On Wednesday evening, the president became 'unglued,' in the words of one official familiar with the president's state of mind." <http://nbcnews.to/2Fjm31m>

THE FALLOUT -- "Trade wars: Tariffs on bourbon, Harleys and blue jeans," by Doug Palmer and Adam Behsudi: "European Union officials are already planning retaliatory actions, targeting products from politically sensitive Republican-run states, including the imposition of tariffs on Harley-Davidsons made in Speaker Paul Ryan's home state of Wisconsin; duties on bourbon made in Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's home state of Kentucky; and duties on orange juice from Florida, a critical swing state." <http://politi.co/2FaN3B6>

-- "Trump's tariff plan upends NAFTA talks," by Megan Cassella in Mexico City: "President Donald Trump's decision to unilaterally slap tariffs on imports of steel and aluminum has staggered the NAFTA renegotiation and threatens to derail talks that were already politically and economically sensitive for all three countries. Canadian, Mexican and U.S. government officials and industry representatives, gathered here for the seventh negotiating round, were sent scrambling when Trump announced plans to levy tariffs of 25 percent on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum imports to protect U.S. national security interests.

"While negotiators have continued to meet, the tone has changed as Canadian and

Mexican representatives try to figure out the impact on their countries and whether their leaders will retaliate if Trump doesn't backtrack. "Why are we signing a trade deal with a country that would unilaterally decide to restrict certain sectors?" said Jorge Guajardo, a former Mexican ambassador who now works as a senior director at McLarty Associates in Washington." <http://politi.co/2GWuCMA>

THIS COULD CAUSE PROBLEMS -- "Trump Won't Exclude Allies From Tariffs, White House Says," by WSJ's Jacob M. Schlesinger: "President Donald Trump plans to apply his steel and aluminum tariffs globally and won't exempt allies such as Canada and Europe, a senior White House official said Friday, an approach that is likely to intensify protests over the move. The statement that there would be no exceptions to the duties came as Trump aides started to flesh out the president's broad Thursday announcement, in which he said the U.S. plans to impose tariffs of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminum. Officials are scrambling to finalize many details ahead of a planned rollout of the full policies next week." <http://on.wsj.com/2tgzOZI>

A HEADLINE TRUMP WILL LIKE -- "In a Pennsylvania Steel Town, Donald Trump's Tariff Is a Winner," by WSJ's Kris Maher in Braddock, Pennsylvania: "President Donald Trump's proposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports have many economists and lawmakers worried about a coming trade war. But workers and others in this community, where steel has been made for well over a century, see a chance for more jobs and bigger paychecks." <http://on.wsj.com/2oQQNg6>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs: America's Seniors may be in for a Big October Surprise.** CMS has proposed regulations that will increase costs and cause disruption for millions of seniors this fall. Tell CMS: don't make changes to popular preferred pharmacy network plans that will stick America's seniors with higher premiums & drug costs. [Learn more.](#) *****

THE PRESIDENT'S HEALTH -- "Trump Swaps His Beloved Burgers for Salads and Soups in New Diet," by Bloomberg's Jennifer Jacobs and Shannon Pettypiece: "The president whose trademark campaign-trail dinner consisted of two McDonald's Big Macs, two Filet-o-Fish sandwiches and a chocolate milkshake is cutting back on doctor's orders to drop a few pounds, according to three people familiar with the matter. Less red meat, more fish. One person said it's been two weeks since he saw the president eat a hamburger. ...

"[Rear Admiral Ronny Jackson] and the vice president's doctor are pushing healthy food choices throughout the West Wing. Trump so far has embraced the new regimen, giving aides the impression he feels he is thriving on his new diet, they said. Still, he is allowing himself indulgences. He ate bacon at breakfast one day this week." <https://bloom.bg/2oLi2bG>

THE BLACKLIST -- "Scaramucci Is on White House 'Exclusion List' Blocking Visits," by Bloomberg's Jen Jacobs and Justin Sink: "Anthony Scaramucci, President Donald Trump's former communications director, is on a list of people blocked from

entering the White House without special approval. A day after saying he wasn't blocked, a White House official confirmed that Scaramucci is indeed among fired officials excluded from the campus. The acknowledgment came after the financier provided to Bloomberg News official White House correspondence that confirmed he was denied an appointment.

"Scaramucci is among a group of former staffers who left 'under adverse circumstances' placed on an 'administrative exclusion list,' the White House said in response to Bloomberg's questions. Those former employees must have any appointments on the premises 'evaluated on a case by case basis.'" <https://bloom.bg/2FIJPcW>

ALWAYS BE HUSTLING -- "Trump to launch major donor initiative after disastrous week," by Alex Isenstadt: "Donald Trump is wrapping up the most chaotic week of his presidency by rolling out a major new donor push -- one of his most serious steps yet to prepare for a 2020 reelection campaign.

"As with [George W.] Bush, the president will reward donors who've bundled thousands of dollars in contributions, giving them an entree to exclusive dinners, political briefings, and future retreats.

"Under the plan, which is intended to provide a fundraising infrastructure that was lacking from Trump's 2016 campaign, donors who raise \$25,000 will join the 'Trump Train' and those who bundle \$45,000 will be part of the '45 Club.' The program, which will jointly benefit Trump's campaign and the [RNC], will introduce higher class levels for larger dollar amounts in the future. Funds raised will also go toward the party's 2018 efforts." <http://politi.co/2FNcWUj>

KUSHNER WATCH -- "Mueller team asking if Kushner foreign business ties influenced Trump policy," by NBC News' Carol Lee, Julia Ainsley and Robert Windrem: "Federal investigators are scrutinizing whether any of Jared Kushner's business discussions with foreigners during the presidential transition later shaped White House policies in ways designed to either benefit or retaliate against those he spoke with, according to witnesses and other people familiar with the investigation.

"Special counsel Robert Mueller's team has asked witnesses about Kushner's efforts to secure financing for his family's real estate properties, focusing specifically on his discussions during the transition with individuals from Qatar and Turkey, as well as Russia, China and the United Arab Emirates, according to witnesses who have been interviewed as part of the investigation into possible collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign to sway the 2016 election.

"As part of the scrutiny of Kushner's discussions with Turks, federal investigators have reached out to Turkish nationals for information on Kushner through the FBI's legal attache office in Ankara, according to two people familiar with the matter.

"Separately, Qatari government officials visiting the U.S. in late January and early February considered turning over to Mueller what they believe is evidence of efforts by their country's Persian Gulf neighbors in coordination with Kushner to hurt their country, four people familiar with the matter said. The Qatari officials decided against cooperating with Mueller for now out of fear it would further strain the country's relations with the White House." <http://nbcnews.to/2oObFnZ>

TRUMP'S SATURDAY -- The president is speaking at a "Trump Victory" reception at Mar-a-Lago this afternoon. He and the First Lady will return to Washington later in the day. They will then attend the Gridiron Club dinner.

BANNON IN ITALY - Katie Watson (@kathrynw5): "Steve Bannon posing for the paparazzi in the Piazza Navona in Rome. Pics by Tony Gentile/Reuters"
<http://bit.ly/2CVdpAK>

CLICKER - "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker -- **16 keepers** <http://politi.co/2F65SFw>

Playbookers

PHOTO DU JOUR: Vice President Mike Pence laughs with Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette before speaking at an America First Policies "Tax Cuts to Put America First" event on March 2 in Detroit. | Paul Sancya/AP Photo

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Veteran Affairs Secretary David Shulkin 'Extremely Paranoid' Ahead of Damning New Investigation, Sources Say," by the Daily Beast's Lachlan Markay, Asawin Suebsaeng and Sam Stein: "Embattled Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin is likely to be the subject of another damaging investigation as early as next week, one that could prove politically fatal. The top watchdog for the Department of Veterans Affairs is preparing a report that is expected to criticize Shulkin over his use of his security detail to run personal errands ...

"Multiple sources in and outside of the administration independently noted a significant uptick in Shulkin's suspiciousness and anxiety of late and have described to him as acting 'extremely paranoid.' Two people familiar with the situation said that Shulkin this week had even ordered an armed guard to stand outside his office on the 10th floor of the VA. According to these sources, the VA secretary also cut off 10th floor access earlier this week to multiple VA appointees who he apparently suspected of disloyalty." <http://thebea.st/2oEGCf7>

THE STORY THAT NEVER DIES -- "Days before the election, Stormy Daniels threatened to cancel deal to keep alleged affair with Trump secret," by WaPo's Beth Reinhard, Frances Stead Sellers and Emma Brown: "The 2016 election was less

than a month away, and Donald Trump's attorney had blown the deadline for paying Stormy Daniels to keep quiet about her alleged affair with the future president.

"In an Oct. 17 email, an attorney for Daniels -- a porn star whose real name is Stephanie Clifford -- threatened to cancel the nondisclosure agreement by the end of the day. That very morning, Trump's attorney, Michael Cohen, had created a limited liability company, public records show, that ultimately would serve as a vehicle for Daniels's payoff. But the money had not arrived. A second email to Cohen, a short time after the first, said Daniels was calling the deal off.

"Please be advised that my client deems her settlement agreement canceled and void,' Daniels's lawyer, Keith Davidson, wrote in the email, which The Washington Post obtained. Ten days later, the \$130,000 payment arrived, according to another email reviewed by The Post. Daniels's story about her sexual encounter with Trump a decade earlier would remain under wraps long past Election Day." <http://wapo.st/2Faf0U2>

PAGING TRACY FLICK -- "Six teenagers are running for governor in Kansas, and suddenly this doesn't seem so preposterous," by WaPo's Monica Hesse in Merriam, Kansas: "And now, a report from the Midwest, where a gangly hope has arrived in the form of children enrobed in various assortments of khakis and blazers, because six teenage boys are running for governor of the state of Kansas. The would-be boy governors of Kansas. This was a funny concept for a while, and then it became absurd, and then a national tragedy happened and it became not funny but actually an emotion approaching tender, even aching." <http://wapo.st/2CVWSwN>

******* A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs: Medicare Part D is working for seniors.** An important part of the program's success comes from preferred pharmacy networks that promote quality and lower drug prices. Preferred pharmacy plans keep premiums low and are the most popular choice for seniors enrolled in Part D. But now, CMS is considering changes that would prevent seniors from choosing plans with preferred pharmacy networks. Tell CMS to stop proposed changes to Medicare Part D that would disrupt preferred pharmacy networks and hurt millions of seniors. [Learn more.](#) *****

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

-- **"Bitter Rivals: Iran and Saudi Arabia"** - PBS' Frontline: "Frontline investigates how a dangerous political rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia has plunged the Middle East into sectarian war." *Cameos by Kim Ghattas, Steve Coll, Ryan Crocker, Vali Nasr* <http://to.pbs.org/2F7zmm9> ... **Part 2** <http://to.pbs.org/2FhljbP>

-- **"The Afterlife of Pablo Escobar,"** by Jon Lee Anderson in the New Yorker: "In Colombia, a drug lord's posthumous celebrity brings profits and controversy." <http://bit.ly/2oLQ6Ew>

-- **"Welcome to the Age of Climate Migration,"** by Jeff Goodell in Rolling Stone:

"Extreme weather due to climate change displaced more than a million people from their homes last year. It could soon reshape the nation." <http://rol.st/2tbs0ZI> (h/t Longform.org)

-- **"The Reckoning,"** by Sean Flynn in Smithsonian Magazine: "Thirty years ago, an acclaimed series of documentaries introduced the world to an isolated tribe in Papua New Guinea. What happened when the cameras left?" <http://bit.ly/2Ffw1AO>

-- **"The Everyday Chaos of Incarceration,"** by Jerry Metcalf in the Marshall Project: "Prison is the very absence of normal. On day one, I was stripped of my clothes alongside a bunch of other men, marched around naked, and issued an ID number. Chaos is a norm, though it sounds oxymoronic to say so. I haven't experienced a truly good night's sleep in two decades. Violence is the ultimate norm. Over the years, I've been stabbed, cut, clunked, almost raped, and had the crap kicked out of me on numerous occasions." <http://bit.ly/2oKQTpg>

-- **"Hitler Looks Eastward,"** by Henry C. Wolfe in the Atlantic's Feb. 1937 issue: "The Führer's promises of new lands, vast natural resources, and employment for everybody are calculated to stir the imagination of the German people. 'Colonies to absorb our surplus population and provide us with the raw materials we lack will solve our economic and social problems', a Nazi official told me. In the opinion of many they have in mind the acquisition of Polish, Lithuanian, Czechoslovak, or Russian territory." <http://theatl.in.tc/2FhsaDj>

-- **"The Case Against Tipping in America,"** by Vince Dixon in Eater: "The data is overwhelming: Tipping encourages racism, sexism, harassment, and exploitation." <http://bit.ly/2FQqnDj>

-- **"The Smart Set,"** by Ludwig Huber in Inference Review, reviewing "Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?" by Frans de Waal: "In one set of experiments, various animals were tested for their ability to copy complex tasks after seeing them performed. Chimpanzees proved able to drag food with a rake, and to open crates with pull, pressure, or rotary locks. They were also able to cooperate in order to obtain a reward. The monkeys used their hands in these experiments; the dogs, their mouths; horses, goats, and pigs used neither. Is a cognitive difference at work?" <http://bit.ly/2FhX66t> ... **\$10.37 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2CUd7KB>

-- **"Among the ufologists,"** by Andrew Stuttaford in the New Criterion - per ALDaily's description: "Welcome to Roswell, New Mexico, the convergence of America's weakness for the strange, penchant for conspiratorial thinking, and knack for turning a buck." <http://bit.ly/2CUJjNV>

-- **"She's taught at the Parkland high school for 14 years. Can she go back?"** by Tampa Bay Times' Lisa Gartner: "As a journalism teacher, Melissa [Falkowski] wanted to answer their questions, and keeping busy kept her calm. But when the microphones were unhooked from the collars of her Douglas T-shirts, she found herself thinking back

to that day in her classroom. Driving her 9-month-old daughter to day care, Melissa couldn't stop sobbing." <http://bit.ly/2F9tBVi>

-- **"Guantánamo, Forever,"** by Amos Barshad in Longreads: "After nearly a decade, Gitmo detainee Haroon Gul believed he had a chance at freedom. Then came President Trump." <http://bit.ly/2GUM6Jp>

-- **"Malls and the future of American retail,"** by Alexandra Lange in Curbed - per Longreads.com's description: "The mall was supposed to be a reinvention of the town square - and for nearly half a century it was, as a public space committed to shopping, eating, or merely lounging around with friends. But the retail apocalypse has taken the core out of the mall, the flagship retail that held it all together, and the new mall may have more in common with a museum, where shopping is less important than an overall mood of luxury and citizenship." <http://bit.ly/2HXBSJy>

-- **"Things Fall Apart,"** by Allyn Gaestel in the Atavist: "A feat of elegant design wowed elite architects and promised to bring education to poor children in Nigeria. Then it collapsed." <http://bit.ly/2FNtEDc>

-- **"Malta: an island of secrets and lies,"** by Matthew Engel in the New Statesman: "Business is booming in the tiny former British colony. But stories of corruption and assassination are filling the newspapers, and it may be headed for the EU's naughty step." <http://bit.ly/2ta5KPL>

-- **"The Inside Story Of How An Ivy League Food Scientist Turned Shoddy Data Into Viral Studies,"** by Stephanie M. Lee in BuzzFeed: "Brian Wansink won fame, funding, and influence for his science-backed advice on healthy eating. Now, emails show how the Cornell professor and his colleagues have hacked and massaged low-quality data into headline-friendly studies to 'go virally big time.'" <http://bzfd.it/2CULv87>

-- **"Burning Out: What Really Happens Inside a Crematorium,"** by Caren Chesler in Popular Mechanics - per TheBrowser.com's description: "The proportion of dead Americans getting cremated has risen from 5% to 50% since 1980, mainly for reasons of cost: Cremation costs around \$280, whereas a grave can cost \$4,000. The Catholic Church used to forbid cremation, but reversed its position in 1963, though it still bans scattering of ashes." <http://bit.ly/2Fbcke4>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen having lunch yesterday at Cafe Deluxe in Cleveland Park. ... Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) at Fiola Mare Friday night.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Caitlin Gibson, a feature writer for the Washington

Post, and **Chris Richards**, the Post's pop music critic, on Tuesday welcomed Riona Laine Richards, who was born at 8:09 a.m. at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring. "Riona clocked in at 8 lbs. 7 oz., and so far, her favorite songs are by Stereolab, Sade, Lil Wayne, Brian Eno, Joni Mitchell and Aphex Twin. Mom and baby are healthy and happy."

-- **Nathan Leamer**, policy adviser to FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, and **Amanda Leamer**, a freelance writer, on Wednesday welcomed their third child, Juniper March Leamer. "She was welcomed with open arms by her big sister India and brother Ephraim. All is well for mother and baby." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2I10yRB>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Liz Oberg, special projects coordinator in WH comms, who is celebrating with a trip to Vegas with her girlfriends (hat tip: Mike Abboud) ... Ellie Warner, Kaine finance aide and a HFA and Tina Smith alum, turned 25 (h/t Ian Sams) ... Edelman's Joe Scannell

BIRTHDAYS: Marc Short ... Alexa Henning, the White House's director of broadcast media ... George Little, partner at the Brunswick Group and a CIA and Pentagon alum (h/t Ben Chang) ... GOP ad maker and consultant Dan Conston is 33 ... The Atlantic's Elaina Plott ... Carlton Carroll, deputy director of comms at Center for Audit Quality, is 36 ... Cameron French, director at Burson-Marsteller, is 34 ... Ben Goldstein ... Michael Remez, editorial officer at the Pew Charitable Trusts ... Richard Lichtenstein, founder and president of Marathon Communication (h/t Jon Haber) ... Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wisc.) is 34 ... Rep. David Schweikert (R-Ariz.) is 56 ... Rep. Paul Cook (R-Calif.) is 75 ... Rep. Tom Emmer (R-Minn.) is 57 ... Jesse Hunt, NRCC national press secretary (h/t Matt Gorman) ... biographer Ron Chernow is 69 ... Ira Glass, host and producer of "This American Life," is 59 (h/t Zoe Chace) ... Caitlin Gallagher, NRSC's press secretary, the pride of Denver and a huge Peyton Manning fan (h/t Katie Martin) ... David Yassky, dean of Pace University School of Law, is 54 ... David Steinhardt is 49 ... Adam Sachs ... Jason Gerson ... Patrick Gavin (h/t Kiki Burger) ...

... **Peter Mirijanian**, who is now helping Abbe Lowell on a freelance basis with media inquiries, is 55 ... Scott Pollard of Hill+Knowlton Strategies (h/t Richard Keil) ... Hannah Blatt, press secretary at House Majority PAC ... Ghada Alkiek, finance director for Elissa Slotkin and a Dale Kildee alum (h/t Mitchell Rivard) ... DCCC's Alex Smith ... Jason Dick, deputy editor at CQ Roll Call ... Lauren Shay Lavin ... Aaron Robinson, senior manager of digital media at Nielsen ... Tariq Khan ... Kristin Lawton, director of comms. for Prosperity Now ... Charles Cote, VP of strategic comms. at PCMA ... Tim Morrison ... Anne Gordon ... Jasen Castillo ... Matt Rhodes ... Geneva Overholser ... Edward Lewine ... Janeen Lawlor ... David Pringle ... Matt Wanning ... Andy Engel ... Carolyn Stanford Taylor.

THE SHOWS, by @MattMackowiak, filing from Austin:

-- **NBC's "Meet the Press":** Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross ... Denis McDonough ... Sen. Angus King (I-Maine). Panel: Tom Brokaw, Al Cardenas, Doris Kearns Goodwin

and Katy Tur

-- **ABC's "This Week"**: Reince Priebus ... Chris Christie ... Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) ... Wilbur Ross. Panel: Cecilia Vega, Matthew Dowd, Van Jones, Meghan McCain and Megan Murphy

-- **CBS's "Face the Nation"**: Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) ... Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) ... Peter Navarro ... father of Parkland victim Andrew Pollack. Panel: Jeffrey Goldberg, Ed O'Keefe, and Margaret Talev

-- **CNN's "State of the Union"**: Peter Navarro ... Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) ... Ohio Gov. John Kasich. Panel: Bakari Sellers, Linda Chavez, former Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) and Jen Psaki

-- **"Fox News Sunday"**: Peter Navarro ... Business Roundtable CEO and president Josh Bolten. Panel: Michael Needham, former Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.), Josh Holmes and Gerald Seib ... "Power Player of the Week" with country singer and philanthropist Dolly Parton

-- **Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) ... former NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly ... Michael Mukasey ... Anthony Scaramucci ... former Gov. Mike Huckabee (R-Ark.). Panel: Michael Goodwin and Lee Carter

-- **Fox News' "MediaBuzz"**: Ed Henry ... Mollie Hemingway ... Capri Cafaro ... Alex Harris ... Kristin Tate ... Cathy Areu ... David Bossie ... Carley Shimkus

-- **CNN's "Inside Politics" with John King**: Panel: Manu Raju, Michael Bender, Abby Phillip and Mary Katharine Ham

-- **CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"**: Panel: Evan Osnos ... former Secretary of State Condi Rice ... Lynda Obst

-- **CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: Panel: Jeff Greenfield, Olivia Nuzzi, Josh Dawsey and Natasha Bertrand ... Steve Brill ... Jordan Klepper

-- **Univision's "Al Punto"**: Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.) ... Ezequiel Hernandez ... Hector Suarez ... Chilean president-elect Sebastian Piñera ... Maria McFarland

-- **C-SPAN: "The Communicators"**: FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn, questioned by Politico's Brian Fung ... **"Newsmakers"**: DNC chairman Tom Perez, questioned by USA Today's Susan Page and The Washington Post's James Hohmann ... **"Q&A"**: Politico Magazine's Joshua Zeitz

-- **MSNBC's "Kasie DC"**: Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) ... Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) ... Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) ... Marc Lotter ... Sam Graham-Felsen ... Phil Rucker ... Eli Stokols ... Anne Gearan ... Tim Alberta ... Ken Dilanian ... Julia Ainsley

-- **"The McLaughlin Group"**: Moderator Tom Rogan with Pat Buchanan, Eleanor Clift, Clarence Page and guest panelist The Federalist's Ben Domenech

-- **Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at <http://bit.ly/2r37J6h>): Author and Go BIG! Media founder Phillip Stutts.

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs: Medicare Part D is working for seniors.** An important part of the program's success comes from preferred pharmacy networks that promote quality and lower drug prices. Preferred pharmacy plans keep premiums low and are the most popular choice for seniors enrolled in Part D. But now, CMS is considering changes that would prevent seniors from choosing plans with preferred pharmacy networks. Tell CMS to stop proposed changes to Medicare Part D that would disrupt preferred pharmacy networks and hurt millions of seniors. [Learn more.](#) *****

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To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Konkus, John
Sent: Fri 3/24/2017 7:32:58 PM
Subject: Fwd: politico story

Begin forwarded message:

From: Alex Isenstadt <aisenstadt@politico.com>
Date: March 24, 2017 at 3:31:12 PM EDT
To: "konkus.john@epa.gov" <konkus.john@epa.gov>, "ericksen.doug@epa.gov" <ericksen.doug@epa.gov>
Subject: politico story

Hi guys,

Hope you're doing well

I wanted to reach out because I'm working on a story looking at how, with Trump's agenda stalled as he inches closer to the 100 day mark, there is increasing finger pointing in the WH, the RNC, federal agencies, and among donors about what's gone wrong.

Some of the piece focuses on finger-pointing within the EPA, and makes a couple of points

- 1) Trump loyalists believe that Pruitt is moving too slowly to implement the president's campaign promises and is operating on his own timetable
- 2) David Schare quit the EPA in part out of concerns that Pruitt was moving too quickly to overturn the endangerment finding
- 3) Within the agency, other Trump loyalists say EPA higher-ups have kept them out of meetings and benched them, and some of them believe that Pruitt is operating on his own agenda as he positions himself for a potential Senate campaign.

Please let me know if you'd like to respond. My deadline is 9 am

alex

Alex Isenstadt

National Political Reporter

POLITICO

Cell: 703-864-0114

Desk: 571-483-2258

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 9/27/2017 10:43:37 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Morgan Stanley: REPUBLICANS' MASSIVE MESS: Moore wins, infrastructure nowhere close to getting done, McConnell's margins could tighten, Corker retiring, tax reform fight to go public -- POLL of CABINET officials' popularity

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Morgan Stanley

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Wednesday morning. THE BIG PICTURE -- REPUBLICANS' MASSIVE MESS.

-- **PRESIDENT TRUMP** went all in for a Senate candidate -- following Mitch McConnell's lead -- and was thoroughly embarrassed, losing to Roy Moore, a man who many in D.C. have said is not fit to serve in Washington.

-- **ROY MOORE** ran a campaign almost entirely against **MITCH MCCONNELL**. So, if Moore wins in December -- a good, but not great, bet -- the Kentucky Republican will be working with a functional majority of 51 lawmakers, making passing any big legislation that much harder. With that partisan makeup, two defections will sink anything.

-- **DEMOCRATS ARE ALREADY HOPING** they can tie the firebrand Moore to other Republican candidates for federal office. There are far too many inflammatory lines for this space, but just recently, Roy Moore lamented racial tensions between "reds and yellows." He has a long history of those types of remarks.

-- **WITH THE FAILURE OF GRAHAM-CASSIDY**, Republicans do not have a single major legislative victory going into October. They are counting on a tax code rewrite to carry them into the 2018 election year.

-- **WHAT HAPPENED TO INFRASTRUCTURE?** Well, according to WaPo's Tory Newmyer and Damian Paletta, Trump has abandoned his plan to include the private sector in funding a massive public works program, which means states and local governments would have to pony up. To put it bluntly -- Republicans are nowhere on this front. If they played their cards right, they could've gotten several moderate Democrats to support an infrastructure package. ***Tory and Damian's story***

<http://wapo.st/2wjauQ1>

-- **THE TAX BLUEPRINT THAT WILL BE UNVEILED TODAY** will be vague and leave a lot for lawmakers to decide down the road. There are many reasons why tax reform is a good deal harder than the White House thinks. Republicans don't want to hike taxes on rich folks, and anything sniffing of that will be difficult. Margins in both chambers are incredibly thin. There are less than 40 days left in the legislative year. The White House has indicated it believes it will get Democratic support, but it's clear if you spend a few moments talking to lawmakers on Capitol Hill the vast majority of Democrats aren't much interested in supporting a plan they had no say in.

-- **REMEMBER THIS:** Six Republicans crafted the tax blueprint behind closed doors. Now 535 lawmakers with opinions will have a say in the details. And thousands of lobbyists looking to protect their carve outs will get in on the action.

-- **SEN. BOB CORKER'S RETIREMENT** is another blow to Senate Republicans. The two-term Tennessee Republican is a key ally of McConnell's but many thought he would have faced a primary opponent from the right. Now, the primary to succeed him will be messy, and the general could be surprisingly challenging for Republicans. He could be just the first Senate GOPer looking for the exits before the 2018 midterm election.

WHAT THE ALABAMA SPECIAL MEANS FOR MCCONNELL -- "Mitch McConnell's dreadful day," by John Bresnahan, Burgess Everett, and Josh Dawsey: "For Mitch McConnell, Tuesday was about as bad as it could get. A vulnerable incumbent senator, Luther Strange, lost handily to Roy Moore, who used the Senate leader as his campaign punching bag. McConnell pulled the plug -- again -- on repealing Obamacare. One of his close allies, Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), announced his retirement. And President Donald Trump is back on McConnell's case, dubbing him 'weak' at a private dinner with conservative activists on Monday evening.

"McConnell's job is in no immediate danger, and he hopes to pivot quickly to tax reform. Yet months of woes are now taking their toll on the GOP leader's agenda, and his caucus. 'It's been a hard summer for all of us,' admitted Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the No. 3 GOP senator.

"Asked Tuesday if he was having a 'tough day,' McConnell ignored the question. And that was before Corker announced his retirement and Moore won. 'We haven't given up on changing the American health care system,' McConnell said. 'We're not going to be able to do that this week, but it still lies ahead of us, and we haven't given up on that.'" <http://politi.co/2hytDY1>

-- **"Moore's win spells trouble for GOP establishment in 2018,"** by Alex Isenstadt in Montgomery, Alabama: "Insurgent Roy Moore's rout of incumbent GOP Sen. Luther Strange in Alabama's special election Tuesday has senior Republicans bracing for a wave of resource-draining primaries across the map that could undermine their best-laid plans to defeat Democrats in 2018. Moore's win -- over an incumbent who benefited

from millions of dollars in spending by a super PAC aligned with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell - is certain to provide fuel for conservative challengers lining up to take on sitting senators in states like Arizona, Nevada, Mississippi.

"The result was a major setback for President Donald Trump, who went all-in for Strange in a state where the commander-in-chief is overwhelmingly popular. And it emboldened Trump's former chief strategist, Steve Bannon, who said the Alabama race is the opening front in a pitched midterm war against GOP incumbents - and an opportunity to undermine his nemesis, McConnell. After the race was called, Bannon stood backstage with Moore as the victorious candidate prayed.

"As he introduced Moore at Tuesday's victory party, Bannon made clear that he was looking far beyond Alabama, which he called the start of a 'revolution.' 'You're going to see in state, after state, after state, people that follow the model of Judge Moore - that do not need to raise money from the elites, from the crony capitalists, from the fat cats in Washington, DC.,' said Bannon at Moore's victory party. The race, he said, centered on the question of 'who was sovereign - the people or the money - and Alabama answered today, the people.'" <http://politi.co/2wUmxHM>

BIG-PICTURE BOB COSTA -- "After Alabama, GOP anti-establishment wing declares all-out war in 2018": "The stunning defeat of President Trump's chosen Senate candidate in Alabama on Tuesday amounted to a political lightning strike -- setting the stage for a worsening Republican civil war that could have profound effects on next year's midterm elections and undermine Trump's clout with his core voters." <http://wapo.st/2fpY9Td>

-- AT THE WHITE HOUSE ... "Regrets? In Alabama Senate race, Trump had a few," by Josh Dawsey: "President Donald Trump began distancing himself from Sen. Luther Strange before ballots were even cast in Alabama's GOP Senate primary, saying at a dinner on Monday night that the candidate he backed was likely to lose - and suggesting he'd done everything he could do given the circumstances. Trump told conservative activists who visited the White House that he'd underestimated the political power of Roy Moore, the firebrand populist and former judge who defeated Strange on Tuesday with the backing of Trump's former chief strategist Steve Bannon, according to three people who were there. Attendees said the president asked questions that suggested he harbored doubts about his endorsement." <http://politi.co/2ysn4NB>

-- JONATHAN MARTIN and ALEX BURNS on A1 of the NYT: "On Dec. 12, Mr. Moore will face Doug Jones, a former federal prosecutor and the Democratic nominee, in a race that will test the party loyalties of center-right voters who may be uneasy about their nominee. It may also reveal just how reliably Republican the state has become in the quarter-century since a Democrat last won a Senate election here.

"Mr. Jones said in an interview Tuesday afternoon that he believed voters would reward a candidate focused on 'kitchen-table issues,' and said Alabama's public reputation was at stake in the election. 'People are tired of being embarrassed in this

state,' Mr. Jones said. 'People want to see someone who can get things done.'"
<http://nyti.ms/2y8JZS2>

-- **"After Luther Strange loses in Alabama, Trump's supportive tweets disappear,"**
by Henry C. Jackson: "Trump ... appears to have deleted at least two tweets, sent
earlier in the day, that offered strong endorsements of Strange. ... 'Luther Strange has
been shooting up the polls since my endorsement,' read one tweet that later
disappeared from his feed. 'Finish the job -- vote today for big Luther.'"
<http://politi.co/2xJuXkp>

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Batteries may power the future of the auto
industry. [Read more](#) about disruption in the automotive industry from Morgan Stanley.

**IT'S FINALLY HERE ... TAX REFORM DETAILS -- NYT'S GLENN THRUSH and
ALAN RAPPEPORT: "Trump to Propose Sweeping Tax Cut for Corporations and
Individuals":** "President Trump will propose a sweeping rewrite of the federal tax code
on Wednesday, outlining a plan to reduce rates for corporations and individuals and
eliminate some popular deductions, in a move that will set off a scramble among
powerful groups eager to protect their tax breaks.

"The proposal will call for slashing the corporate tax rate to 20 percent from 35
percent, doubling the standard deduction for individual taxpayers and slightly increasing
the bottom tax rate to 12 percent from 10 percent, according to two officials briefed on
the details of the blueprint.

"The framework, which has been agreed upon by Republican leaders in the House
and Senate, leaves most of the details to Congress but proposes a reduction in the
individual rate to 35 percent from 39.6 percent, while leaving the door open for an
unspecified, higher bracket for the wealthiest Americans. The plan would also, for the
first time, create a 25 percent tax for 'pass through' businesses, which account for the
vast majority of business income in the United States and are currently taxed at
individual rates." <http://nyti.ms/2hytDat>

-- **WAPO'S DAMIAN PALETTA, MIKE DEBONIS and CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON:** "By
refusing to specify on Wednesday which tax breaks could be jettisoned, GOP leaders
make a calculated effort to try to postpone any backlash while they try to build a
coalition, said the people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were
not authorized to discuss the internal negotiations.

"But they plan to lean heavily into promising Americans that the tax changes will
lead to a wave of economic growth that will spur new jobs and better wages if the tax
blueprint is passed into law.

"Trump told a group of Democrats and Republicans on Tuesday the tax framework
could lead the economy to grow more than 6 percent a year, more than double what

even his advisers had hoped for, and a view that many economists believe is preposterous." <http://wapo.st/2fQA8p8>

-- HOW HE PLANS TO SELL IT ... -- "Trump plans to enlist grassroots and Democrats to sell tax plan he will call biggest in history," by USA Today's Heidi M. Przybyla: "Trump will make the announcement alongside Indiana Sen. Joe Donnelly, a Democrat planning to travel with the president, and in tandem with the plan's release by Republican negotiators on Capitol Hill. Donnelly is considered one of the most endangered Democratic senators up for reelection in 2018; he will make the trip unless he is needed in Washington for Senate votes. ...

"Trump told dinner attendees that he thought a previous event in North Dakota, where he was accompanied by that state's Democratic senator, Heidi Heitkamp, was a success and that he wants to model future events off it. Yet one Democrat who attended the Tuesday meeting with Trump said Democrats haven't been consulted on a plan that will favor the wealthy, create more incentives to ship jobs overseas and force cuts to Medicare and Social Security." <https://usat.ly/2hx6uc6>

-- ... BUT THERE IS CONCERN HE'LL FLY OFF THE RAILS: "Trump hits the road to sell tax plan - but some worry what he'll say," by Nancy Cook and Ben White: "President Donald Trump is expected to tout the Republicans' new tax blueprint as one of the biggest tax cuts in recent American history at a Wednesday rally in Indiana - but Republican lawmakers, lobbyists and others are worried about exactly what he'll say. ... 'He's the one guy left in Washington who still wants a 15 percent corporate rate,' said one person close to the president and the tax reform discussions. 'They could put 20 percent down on paper and he could go out and say 15 percent anyway. He goes to these tax meetings and people just hammer him but he still wants 15 percent.'" <http://politi.co/2wV9TUj>

HOUSE REPUBLICANS have a five-hour retreat today at National Defense University, where they will talk about tax reform. ***The House Republican Conference video pushing tax reform*** <http://bit.ly/2fyudrT> ... They are also launching a website, fairandsimple.gop.

TRUMP'S WEDNESDAY -- THE PRESIDENT meets with Rex Tillerson at 10:30 a.m., and then heads to Indianapolis for a tax reform speech, which is slated to begin around 3:20 p.m.

NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- MOST POPULAR CABINET MEMBERS: Defense Secretary James Mattis topped the list of Trump's most popular advisers with a **40%** favorable rating (+20% net favorable), according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll. **EVERY CABINET MEMBER** is under water. **JOHN KELLY: 39%** (+17 net), **BEN CARSON: 42%** (+9% net), **DAVID SHULKIN: 28%** (+9 net), **REX TILLERSON: 35%** (+7% net), **SONNY PERDUE: 24%** (+4% net). **LEAST POPULAR: BETSY DEVOS**, who has **28%** favorable, and **40%** unfavorable rating. **JEFF SESSIONS: 34%** (-4% net), **RICK PERRY: 30%** (-3% net), **STEVEN MNUCHIN:**

26% (-3% net), **RYAN ZINKE: 22%** favorable, **22%** unfavorable, **22%** have no opinion of him, and **34%** haven't heard of him.

THE BACKSTORY -- "Trump's N.F.L. Critique a Calculated Attempt to Shore Up His Base," by NYT's Glenn Thrush and Maggie Haberman: "President Trump was restless on the flight home from his rally on Friday night in Alabama, griping about the size of the crowd, wondering how his pink tie played with his audience and fretting about the low energy of the Senate candidate he was there to bolster. But there was one part of the trip that cheered him up, according to three people close to the president: rallygoers' thunderous approval of his attack on Colin Kaepernick, a former N.F.L. quarterback, for kneeling in protest during the national anthem, a slam punctuated by an epithet-laced suggestion that team owners fire employees who disrespect patriotic tradition. ...

"In private, the president and his top aides freely admit that he is engaged in a culture war on behalf of his white, working-class base, a New York billionaire waging war against 'politically correct' coastal elites on behalf of his supporters in the South and in the Midwest. He believes the war was foisted upon him by former President Barack Obama and other Democrats - and he is determined to win, current and former aides said." <http://nyti.ms/2yl2ee2>

ELIANA JOHNSON and ALEX ISENSTADT: "Trump defends NFL stance at GOP donor dinner": <http://politi.co/2k1YsIZ>

-- "A majority of adults disagree with Trump on firing athletes who kneel during anthem: Reuters/Ipsos poll," by Reuters' Chris Kahn: "A majority of Americans disagree with President Donald Trump's assertion that football players should be fired for kneeling during the national anthem, even though most say they would personally stand during the song, according to an exclusive Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll released on Tuesday. The Sept. 25-26 poll found that 57 percent of adults do not think the National Football League should fire players who kneel. This included 61 percent of NFL fans who watch at least a few games per season. The results were split along party lines, however, as 82 percent of Democrats and 29 percent of Republicans disagreed with the president's comments about firing football players." <http://reut.rs/2wU2vgH>

-- HOT JOB - "Senior Communications Strategist" at the NFL: <http://bit.ly/2xzcWDj>

RUSSIA WATCH -- "IRS shares information with special counsel in Russia probe," by CNN's Manu Raju, Pamela Brown and Evan Perez: "The IRS is now sharing information with special counsel Robert Mueller about key Trump campaign officials, after the two entities clashed this summer over both the scope of the investigation into Russia's meddling in the 2016 election and a raid on former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort's home, people briefed on the matter tell CNN. ...

"After several months of being at odds, one source said, the IRS Criminal Investigation division is now sharing information about campaign associates, including

Manafort and former White House national security adviser Michael Flynn. The sharing happened after the two camps reached an agreement following consultation with officials at the Treasury Department. CNN has learned the IRS Criminal Investigation agents had been working with the FBI to investigate Manafort since before the election in a similar probe that centered on possible money laundering and tax fraud issues, according to the sources." <http://cnn.it/2wWrhrG>

-- **"Special counsel interviews with White House staff could start later this week,"** by CNN's Gloria Borger and Pamela Brown: "Special counsel investigators could start interviewing current and former White House staff as soon as later this week regarding the Russian probe, two sources familiar with the matter tell CNN. One source cautioned it is still being worked out with Robert Mueller's office and said it might be delayed until next week." <http://cnn.it/2wVwxvN>

-- **"Blumenthal: '99 percent sure' of Russia indictments,"** by Darren Samuelsohn: "Criminal charges against two former top advisers to President Donald Trump are virtually certain, Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal said Tuesday. Michael Flynn and Paul Manafort are almost sure to be indicted as a result of Special Counsel Robert Mueller's probe into Russian interference in the 2016 election, the Connecticut senator told POLITICO. 'I'm about 99 percent sure there will be some criminal charges from this investigation,' said Blumenthal, a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. ... Blumenthal said he is less certain Trump himself would end up facing charges, including for possible obstruction of justice for his firing of FBI Director James Comey." <http://politi.co/2xFeNs9>

TRUMP'S CABINET ...

-- **DRIP, DRIP, DRIP: "Price's private-jet travels included visits with colleagues, lunch with son,"** by Dan Diamond and Rachana Pradhan: "Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price took a government-funded private jet in August to get to St. Simons Island, an exclusive Georgia resort where he and his wife own land, a day and a half before he addressed a group of local doctors at a medical conference that he and his wife have long attended.

"The St. Simons Island trip was one of two taxpayer-funded flights on private jets in which Price traveled to places where he owns property, and paired official visits with meetings with longtime colleagues and family members. On June 6, HHS chartered a jet to fly Price to Nashville, Tennessee, where he owns a condominium and where his son resides. Price toured a medicine dispensary and spoke to a local health summit organized by a longtime friend. He also had lunch with his son, an HHS official confirmed. An HHS official said both the Georgia and Tennessee trips were for official government business and were paid for by the department." <http://politi.co/2wjM8p8>

-- **WAPO: "EPA spending almost \$25,000 to install a secure phone booth for Scott Pruitt,"** by Brady Dennis: "The Environmental Protection Agency is spending nearly \$25,000 to construct a secure, soundproof communications booth in the office of

Administrator Scott Pruitt, according to government contracting records.

"The agency signed a \$24,570 contract earlier this summer with Acoustical Solutions, a Richmond-based company, for a 'privacy booth for the administrator.' The company sells and installs an array of sound-dampening and privacy products, from ceiling baffles to full-scale enclosures like the one purchased by the EPA. The project's scheduled completion date is Oct. 9, according to the contract. Typically, such soundproof booths are used to conduct hearing tests. But the EPA sought a customized version -- one that eventually would cost several times more than a typical model -- that Pruitt can use to communicate privately." <http://wapo.st/2y7PHU1>

-- **"Dismayed by Trump, Head of Drug Enforcement Administration to Leave,"** by NYT's Mike Schmidt: "The acting head of the Drug Enforcement Administration will resign at the end of the week, according to law enforcement officials, who said he had become convinced that President Trump had little respect for the law. The official, Chuck Rosenberg, who twice served as chief of staff to the former F.B.I. director James B. Comey and remains a close confidant, had grown disillusioned with Mr. Trump. The president fired Mr. Comey in May, and then in July told law enforcement officers 'please don't be too nice' when handling crime suspects. Mr. Rosenberg forcefully rejected Mr. Trump's comment, sending an email to all D.E.A. employees at the time to tell them that they should not mistreat suspects." <http://nyti.ms/2wWh8Ln>

THE JUICE ...

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: JESSE KAMZOL**, former RNC chief data officer, has joined data and analytics firm Genus AI's Washington office for political and consumer clients.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Roy Moore greets supporters in Montgomery, Ala. on Sept. 26. Moore defeated incumbent Senator Luther Strange (R-Ala.) in a Republican special election primary runoff and will face Democrat Doug Jones in December. | Brynn Anderson/AP Photo

WHAT SEN. MARK WARNER IS READING -- "Russian-funded Facebook ads backed Stein, Sanders and Trump," by Josh Dawsey: "Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein was the beneficiary of at least one of the Russian-bought political ads on Facebook that federal government officials suspect were intended to influence the 2016 election. Other advertisements paid for by shadowy Russian buyers criticized Hillary Clinton and promoted Donald Trump. Some backed Bernie Sanders and his platform even after his presidential campaign had ended, according to a person with knowledge of the ads. The pro-Stein ad came late in the political campaign and pushed her candidacy for president ...

"The ads show a complicated effort that didn't necessarily hew to promoting Trump and bashing Clinton. Instead, they show a desire to create divisions while sometimes praising Trump, Sanders and Stein. A number of the ads seemed to question Clinton's authenticity and tout some of the liberal criticisms of her candidacy. There is no indication Stein, Sanders or Trump was aware of the advertisements, which were described to POLITICO by people with knowledge of them." <http://politi.co/2yFR21j>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "U.S. does not believe Cuba is behind sonic attacks on American diplomats," by McClatchy's Franco Ordonez and Anita Kumar: "The White House does not believe the Cuban government is behind the mysterious sonic attacks against U.S. personnel but plans to pull American staff out of Havana as the number of cases climbs, according to multiple U.S. sources familiar with the investigation. 'No one believes that the Cubans are responsible,' said one source, echoing comments from others who are closely involved in the situation. 'All of the evidence points that they're not.' Sources would not say who U.S. intelligence believes is responsible." <http://hrlld.us/2wUb776>

VALLEY TALK -- "Tech Firms Add \$300 Million to Trump Administration's Computer Science Push," by NYT's Cecilia Kang: "Many of the country's largest tech companies, including Amazon, Facebook, Google, Microsoft and Salesforce, on Tuesday pledged a total of \$300 million for computer science education, part of a partnership with the Trump administration meant to prepare students for careers in technology. The corporate donations follow a White House effort to direct federal money toward teacher training and resources that bolster science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, education. President Trump on Monday directed the Education Department to put \$200 million in grant money toward computer science education." <http://nyti.ms/2xAeJYQ>

WOMEN RULE PODCAST: "Trump's tough talk on Iran might have repercussions: Actress and activist Nazanin Boniadi has a message for President Trump: stop emboldening Iranian leaders by threatening to blow up the deal your predecessor made with Iran. In the latest Women Rule podcast, the British-Iranian actress emphasizes that 'the nuclear issue has overshadowed human rights' in Iran for too long, and that increasingly harsh rhetoric from D.C. will result in further oppression of the Iranian people. 'The hardliners in Iran are fully aware that if they solve the nuclear issue and they get rid of the nuclear standoff with the U.S., the global attention will shift back onto human rights in Iran,' she said. 'That's the last thing they want.'" ***Listen to the podcast*** <http://politi.co/2olmtJ7>

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Amid a confluence of regulatory, market and technological factors, the production and sales of battery-powered electric vehicles may finally shift into high gear. A Morgan Stanley report projects that as many as a billion electric vehicles will be on the road worldwide by 2050. [Read more.](#) *****

HAPPENING TODAY -- The Atlantic and the Aspen Institute are hosting the 9th annual Washington Ideas Forum starting today at the Harman Center. Among the speakers

today: Mitch Landrieu, Newsmax CEO Chris Ruddy, Marty Baron, Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg, and more. On Thursday speakers include: Nancy Pelosi, Steven Mnuchin, Mark Warner, Jeff Flake, and Madeleine Albright, among others. <http://bit.ly/2y7ejMM>

POLITICO AGENDA: THE AGING ISSUE -- "The U.S. has marked a profound demographic shift with 10,000 baby boomers turning 65 each day, in addition to the growing population of adults over the age of 85 increasing exponentially each year. Despite this, health care policy and practice haven't necessarily caught up to the challenges that older patients face. The newest issue of POLITICO Agenda explores the challenges facing the American healthcare system due to our aging demography:" <http://politi.co/2xzjX76>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Rolling Stone's Sales Pitch to Investors: Go Monthly, Slash Editorial Budget, Pivot to Video," by NYMag's Gabe Sherman: "According to a Wenner Media financial document obtained by Vanity Fair, Rolling Stone's print advertising revenue is projected to be just \$10.9 million in 2020, down from \$28.6 million in 2015. Circulation revenue will drop by nearly half during this period to \$6.3 million. ... [A]s Wenner and his 27-year-old son, Gus, who succeeded Wenner as president and C.O.O. of Wenner Media, meet with potential bidders, they are pitching an austere business plan that includes cutting the editorial budget by 30 percent and converting the biweekly magazine to a monthly. ...

"Wenner's sales pitch to investors, according to the document, calls for cutting the editorial budget from a high of \$8.1 million in 2015 to \$4.2 million in 2020. With the reduction in the number of printed issues, production costs will drop to \$7.3 million in 2020 from \$18.1 million in 2015. Gus Wenner says the pitch he is making to investors is that the future of Rolling Stone is online and in video and television." <http://bit.ly/2frExyi>

--PER MICHAEL CALDERONE'S MORNING MEDIA: "Advocates for the news media will meet on Oct. 2 with Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein to discuss how the Justice Department deals with journalists in leak investigations. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced plans in August to revisit guidelines for media subpoenas, remarks which heightened fears journalists could be prosecuted in the Trump era."

-- "Fox News' Sean Hannity Tops MSNBC's Rachel Maddow in First 9 p.m. Matchup" - Variety: <http://bit.ly/2fyiPwb>

-- "Fox News Announces New Daytime Lineup: Harris Faulkner at 1 PM, Dana Perino at 2" - Mediaite: <http://bit.ly/2xA3oIn>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Team Corker at NOPA last night celebrating his years of service: Sen. Bob Corker, Todd Womack, Micah Johnson, Hallie Williams, Rob Strayer, Chris Tuttle, Josh

Falzone, Chuck Harper, and John Rader ... former Rep. Tim Huelskamp (R-Kansas) outside the Peet's near Metro Center yesterday looking at his phone.

OUT AND ABOUT -- SPOTTED at a fundraiser last night at the Smoot Tewes Group for Obama and Clinton alum Buffy Wicks, who is running for California State Assembly in the 15th District: Meg Ansara, Paulette Aniskoff, Isaac Baker, Andrew Bleeker, Justin Brennan, Brian Bond, Pia Carusone, Jennifer O'Malley Dillon and Patrick Dillon, Adrienne Donato, Adrienne Elrod, Scott Goodstein, Ann Marie Habershaw, Karine Jean-Pierre, Dan Kanninen, Stephen Krupin, Clare Doody, Kyle Lierman, Marlon Marshall and Stacey Berger, Jonathan Mantz, Minyon Moore, Brandon Neal, Alexis Prieur L'Heureux, Tim Tagaris, Nicholas Rathod, Diana Rogalle, Sonal Shah, Erik Smith, Sean Sweeney, Mitch Stewart and Kelly Ward.

-- **NARAL hosted its 5th annual #MenForChoice** party last night at Baby Wale, with special guest Senator Cory Booker. The featured cocktail was a "Ruth Bader GINsberg." **SPOTTED:** Ilyse Hogue, Angie Kuefler, Soraya Chemaly, Kimball Stroud, Michael Khoo, Khalid Pitts, Sunita and Dan Leeds, Rene Redwood, John Jameson, Melinda Bieber, John Neffinger, Ari Rabin-Havt, Shripal Shah, Tyrone Gayle, Amanda Thayer, Kaylie Hanson Long, Liz Schoetz, Sam Lau, Alex De Luca, Rory Steele, Melissa Schwartz, David Williamson.

TRANSITIONS -- Arlene Corbin Lewis has joined the D.C. office of the public policy think tank, Demos, as the director of communications. She previously was at the Case Foundation where she was the VP for communications. ... Lincoln Strategy Group has brought on **Corey Vale** as EVP and chief digital strategist. Vale has had senior campaign roles with former Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R-Minn.), former Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.).

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Lisa Verstandig, assistant to Robert Allbritton, and **Scott Verstandig**, senior director of legislative affairs at Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, email friends and family: "John Asher ('Jack') Verstandig you are our greatest joy! Born Saturday, September 23rd at 8:13 a.m. 7 lbs. 4 oz. 20 in. Mom and baby are resting and doing great! Dad is still recovering." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2wVPvIC>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Robert Kagan turned 59... Josie Martin, head of corporate affairs and comms at Purdue ... Bloomberg's Lucas Shaw (hat tip: Henry Seltzer)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Jeff Birnbaum, president of BGR Public Relations and longtime D.C. journalist, is 61. **How he got his start in Washington:** "I was transferred to Washington from the New York bureau of the Wall Street Journal in 1982 to cover agriculture and general assignment." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2k24lpz>

BIRTHDAYS: New America Foundation head Anne-Marie Slaughter ... Jenny Burke, acting communications director at DHS (h/t Lauren Claffey) ... Rep. Debbie Wasserman

Schultz (D-Fla.) is 51 ... Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-N.Y.) is 63 ... Recode's Tony Romm ... Lucy McCalmont, coordinating producer at the Sports Tribune ... Megan Grant, VP for strategic comms at Glover Park Group ... Brian Killheffer is 36 ... Christina DiPasquale ... LaVerne Alexander ... David Ratcliff (h/t Jon Haber) ... Kristin Sosanie ... Meridith McGraw of ABC News (h/ts Arlette Saenz and Natalie Boyse) ... Will Bredderman ... Brendan Dunn, policy adviser and counsel to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Since Brendan is leading tax reform for the leader, he's celebrating by getting the Big 6 rollout as a special birthday present (h/t Erica Suares) ... AP's Pablo Gorondi ... LCV's Sara Chieffo ... Concetta Cantelmo ... Juleanna Glover (hat tip: Becca) ... Martin D. Franks ... Laura Whitefield, project manager at Stand Together and the pride of Houston ...

... **Carl Woog**, NSC and DoD alum, now lead for policy communications at WhatsApp (h/t Ben Chang) ... Christian Hertenstein, senior account supervisor at Qorvis MSLGROUP, is 32 ... Marcus Sebastian Mason, senior partner of the Madison Group (h/t Robb Watters) ... Caitlyn Schneeweiss ... Ed Niles, lead media strategist at BlueLabs ... Deloitte's Alexa Wertman is 27 (hubby tip: Josh Brown) ... Bryce Hallowell, director of public affairs for Chevron Phillips Chemical (h/t Kristina Baum) ... Politico Europe's Nick Vinocur ... Saraïd Donnelly ... WJLA alum Tim Traylor ... Politico's Steven Overly and Jonathan McClure ... Charles Percy ... Meg Jones Margiotta ... Rene Carbone Bardorf ... Earl Plante is 44 ... Sean Miller ... NBC News' Matthew Vann ... PwC's Scott Moshier is 32 ... former Rep. Ed Case (D-HI) is 65 ... Geoff Burgan, comms director for Andrew Gillum's Florida gubernatorial campaign ... Shaun Cassidy is 59 ... Michelle Carrier ... Kathy Heinan ... Lee Wasserman ... John Loredó ... Abby Curran (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley** : For years, many industry watchers have predicted the demise of traditional gas-guzzlers and the rise of electric cars. Yet, despite the advent of hybrid vehicles, better and cheaper batteries, and the entry of high-performance luxury electric competitors, the former continues to dominate roads globally. Now, however, the automobile's long-promised electric future may be in sight, according to a new report that projects that as many as a billion battery electric vehicles will be on the road worldwide by 2050, reaching parity with vehicles powered by the internal combustion engine. Why have electric cars never been successful before and why is it different this time? [Read more from Morgan Stanley.](#) *****

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Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wed 12/6/2017 1:40:46 AM
Subject: Re:

I'm also happy to buy you an off-the-record beer for all your troubles.

On Fri, Dec 1, 2017 at 1:09 PM Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Okay, but please do check. He has nothing to be afraid of. I am writing a piece that is totally balanced.

Have a good weekend. Thanks for the additional statement.

On Fri, Dec 1, 2017 at 8:22 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

I can check and circle back on Monday. Honestly we are full through mid-January (mostly because of the holidays).

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 1, 2017, at 10:16 AM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Fine, but how about an interview with him? I know you think I am writing a hit piece, but I am not. I wouldn't need an interview for that. I wouldn't have spoken to people in Oklahoma who say he is the best person they've ever worked for.

On Fri, Dec 1, 2017 at 8:13 AM Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

One more response you can use about your office ?

"Rather than getting in the weeds about process, Administrator Pruitt is meeting with top career staff at the lead inundated East Chicago Superfund site, Gold King Mine, San Jacinto Waste Pits and other polluted sites because this EPA is about achieving results." EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 17, 2017, at 10:15 AM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Enjoyed the Administrator's interview with the Washington Post.
Could we set something similar up for Newsweek?

On Thu, Nov 16, 2017 at 3:28 PM, Wilcox, Jahan

<wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We sent you an on-the-record statement in October and we will send you this on-the-record statement as well.

On-The-Record Statement ... “Administrator Pruitt has met with staff from every region and took the unprecedented step of meeting with EPA’s criminal investigators – a department that Obama slashed by 24 percent – about how we can work together to protect the environment and American jobs.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water]

systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example. 'We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,' Scheraga said. 'They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' (Politico Pro, 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." (Seattle Times, 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." (NTK Network, Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Have a good day Alexander and we look forward to reading your story.

Best,

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Alexander Nazaryan [mailto:a.nazaryan@newsweek.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:08 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject:

Hi Jahan, I just want to make sure my requests are being taken seriously. That wasn't the impression I got when we spoke today.

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer
Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

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Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

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Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer
Newsweek

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Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 12/14/2017 6:25:28 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates: PAUL RYAN may step down after 2018 midterms -- ARTHUR SULZBERGER to retire from NYT -- FARENTHOLD not running for reelection -- DISNEY buys key assets of 21ST CENTURY FOX

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)) and ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

Good Thursday afternoon. PAUL RYAN CONSIDERING RETIREMENT AFTER 2018 -- TIM ALBERTA and RACHAEL BADE: "Despite several landmark legislative wins this year, and a better-than-expected relationship with President Donald Trump, Ryan has made it known to some of his closest confidants that this will be his final term as speaker. He consults a small crew of family, friends and staff for career advice, and is always cautious not to telegraph his political maneuvers. But the expectation of his impending departure has escaped the hushed confines of Ryan's inner circle and permeated the upper-most echelons of the GOP. In recent interviews with three dozen people who know the speaker -- fellow lawmakers, congressional and administration aides, conservative intellectuals and Republican lobbyists -- not a single person believed Ryan will stay in Congress past 2018." <http://politi.co/2jUUgbB>

ARTHUR SULZBERGER, the publisher of The New York Times, will retire on Dec. 31, the paper announced today. He will continue to serve as chairman of the company's board of directors. His son **A.G. SULZBERGER** will start as publisher on Jan. 1, 2018. **The NYT story** <http://nyti.ms/2ksjUEe>

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE has delayed his planned trip to the Middle East to preside over the tax vote in the Senate, his office announced this morning. He'll leave after the vote.

BREAKING -- "FCC votes to repeal net neutrality rules," by Margret Harding McGill: "The FCC today voted 3-2 along party lines to repeal the Obama-era net neutrality regulations, handing a victory to telecom providers over the objections of tech companies including Netflix, Reddit and Etsy. The agency's Republican majority approved a plan to scrap the rules preventing internet providers like Comcast and AT&T from blocking or slowing web traffic, or creating so-called paid internet fast lanes." <http://politi.co/2jUgeel>

FARENTHOLD OUT -- Elena Schneider: "Rep. Blake Farenthold said Thursday he will not seek reelection after facing mounting allegations of sexual harassment and other

inappropriate behavior from former staff members. In a video posted on his Facebook page, the Texas Republican acknowledged that his office 'accommodated destructive gossip, off-hand comments, off-color jokes and behavior, in general, that was less than professional.'...

"Farenthold spoke with House Speaker Paul Ryan twice on Wednesday and met with National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Steve Stivers, according to GOP sources familiar with the conversations." <http://politi.co/2ksa7Oh>

-- **RYAN** was asked Thursday if Farenthold should step down immediately. Ryan said he thought his resignation was appropriate.

TRICKLE DOWN EFFECT -- "Doubting the intelligence, Trump pursues Putin and leaves a Russian threat unchecked," by WaPo's Greg Miller, Greg Jaffe and Phil Rucker: "Nearly a year into his presidency, Trump continues to reject the evidence that Russia waged an assault on a pillar of American democracy and supported his run for the White House. The result is without obvious parallel in U.S. history, a situation in which the personal insecurities of the president -- and his refusal to accept what even many in his administration regard as objective reality -- have impaired the government's response to a national security threat. The repercussions radiate across the government. ...

"Trump has never convened a Cabinet-level meeting on Russian interference or what to do about it, administration officials said. Although the issue has been discussed at lower levels at the National Security Council, one former high-ranking Trump administration official said there is an unspoken understanding within the NSC that to raise the matter is to acknowledge its validity, which the president would see as an affront. ... His position has alienated close American allies and often undercut members of his Cabinet -- all against the backdrop of a criminal probe into possible ties between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin. ...

"The feeble American response has registered with the Kremlin. U.S. officials said that a stream of intelligence from sources inside the Russian government indicates that Putin and his lieutenants regard the 2016 'active measures' campaign -- as the Russians describe such covert propaganda operations -- as a resounding, if incomplete, success." ***With details on H.R. McMaster's battles with Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller, turmoil in the NSC, and the daily presidential briefings and more***
<http://wapo.st/2ksydIN>

ROY MOORE released a video statement where he still did not concede the election: "In this race we have not received the final count to include military and provisional ballots. This has been a very close race, and we are waiting certification by the secretary of state." <http://bit.ly/2jTZR1T>

HMM... -- "Omarosa Manigault speaks out about WH exit: 'I have seen things that have made me uncomfortable'," by ABC News' Veronica Stracqualursi

<http://abcn.ws/2zcguOl>

***** **A message from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates:** The UAE and the US are partnering to create economic growth and jobs for people in both countries. For eight years in a row, the UAE has been the top market in the Middle East and North Africa for US exports. <http://politi.co/2AZsOU3> *****

FOR YOUR RADAR -- AP at 12:59 p.m.: "FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) - Wife of Kentucky lawmaker who killed himself after sexual assault allegation surfaced says she will run for his seat."

FIVE YEARS LATER -- CNN: "5 years after Sandy Hook, the victims have not been forgotten" <http://cnn.it/2zc4zQK>

-- **"The legacy of Newtown: Lockdowns, active-shooter training and school security,"** by WaPo's Katie Zezima and Susan Svrluga: "The massacre on Dec. 14, 2012, led to calls for gun control, as families mourned the loss of their innocent children. Five years later, little about the nation's federal gun laws has changed. But the Newtown shooting forever altered the way American schools approach safety and assess risk, ushering in an era in which schools feel particularly vulnerable to the threat of shootings and students must know what to do in case one happens.

"The result is that for America's students, lockdowns like the one that helped save lives at Rancho Tehama Elementary and active-shooter training are now as commonplace as fire drills. Buzzers and locks have fortified school doors that were once left wide open. The sight of police officers, even in elementary schools, is now common. And some districts allow staff members to carry weapons at school for what they believe is an added layer of security." <http://wapo.st/2zcaKo1>

ON THE WORLD STAGE -- "Exposed: Kremlin-Linked Slush Funds Funnelling Money To Syria's Chemical Weapons Financiers," by BuzzFeed's Slex Campbell and Tom Warren: "A network of secret slush funds inside a corrupt Cyprus bank has exposed Kremlin connections to frontmen for Syria's chemical weapons programme and the terrorist group ISIS. The web of accounts at FBME Bank, revealed in an explosive cache of leaked documents, also moved hundreds of millions of dollars from suspect Moscow-based figures including associates of the Russian president Vladimir Putin, mafia figures, and Kremlin officials. ...

"Russian accounts at FBME did not serve just one purpose. They were involved in an array of activities that have caused political strife in the West - including the massive theft by Russian government officials that led to the passage in the US of the Magnitsky Act, which sanctioned more than 44 prominent Russians and infuriated Putin. More than \$22 million of the stolen cash ended up in FBME accounts controlled by a major Russian mafia boss, according to documents seen by BuzzFeed News. The offshore bank also became an outlet for official Kremlin business with another Western nemesis: Syria. One company in the slush fund network sent more than \$33 million to the

Russian Ministry of Finance to settle debt with the Syrian regime in 2010, documents show." <http://bzfd.it/2ksqeeY> ... **Part one of the investigation** <http://bzfd.it/2ktGoEz>

TOP EDS -- TIM COOK and CHARLES KOCH in WaPo -- "Congress must act on the 'dreamers'": "As a matter of both policy and principle, we strongly agree that Congress must act before the end of the year to bring certainty and security to the lives of dreamers. Delay is not an option. Too many people's futures hang in the balance. Both of our companies are fortunate to have dreamers on our teams. We know from experience that the success of our businesses depends on having employees with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. It fuels creativity, broadens knowledge and helps drive innovation. For our nation to maximize progress and prosperity, we need more, not fewer, talented people at the table." <http://wapo.st/2kt6EiF>

-- LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA in WaPo -- "This is what Puerto Ricans need from the government. Right now": "There's no shortage of compassion and goodwill for Puerto Rico among the American people. But it must be matched by the recognition of our government that the American citizens of Puerto Rico need, demand and require equal treatment." <http://wapo.st/2ktYCWK>

BUSINESS BURST -- "Disney Agrees to Buy Key Parts of 21st Century Fox in \$52.4 Billion Deal," by WSJ's Allison Prang, Ben Fritz and Dana Mattioli: "Walt Disney Co. said Thursday it would buy select assets of 21st Century Fox for \$52.4 billion in stock as Disney moves to increase its footprint in video streaming and television amid a changing media landscape. Disney's acquisition includes the company's Twentieth Century Fox film and television studio and its international and cable TV businesses. In the deal Disney will also assume about \$13.7 billion of debt of 21st Century Fox. The deal is valued at \$66.1 billion, Disney said ...

"Fox Broadcasting Network and its stations, Fox News Channel, Fox Business Network, Fox Sports 1 and 2 and the Big Ten Network will be listed in a separate company for shareholders, Disney said. The new company will also include Fox's Roku investment and a Los Angeles studio lot, while Disney will get Fox's Hulu interests and Fox Sports Regional Networks. ...

"Disney Chairman and Chief Executive Bob Iger, previously scheduled to retire in July of 2019, has agreed to continue in both posts through the end of 2021, the company said." <http://on.wsj.com/2ktvDIN>

-- @Hadas_Gold: "Iger says he and James Murdoch will continue discussion over next month as to whether he will have a role with Disney in the future. No announcement today."

VALLEY TALK -- GARRETT GRAFF in WIRED -- "How a dorm room Minecraft scam brought down the internet": "As the 2016 US presidential election drew near, fears began to mount that the so-called Mirai botnet might be the work of a nation-state practicing for an attack that would cripple the country as voters went to the polls. The

truth, as made clear in that Alaskan courtroom Friday -- and unsealed by the Justice Department on Wednesday -- was even stranger: The brains behind Mirai were a 21-year-old Rutgers college student from suburban New Jersey and his two college-age friends from outside Pittsburgh and New Orleans. All three -- Paras Jha, Josiah White, and Dalton Norman, respectively -- admitted their role in creating and launching Mirai into the world. Originally, prosecutors say, the defendants hadn't intended to bring down the internet -- they had been trying to gain an advantage in the computer game Minecraft." <http://bit.ly/2jTDZnm>

MEDIAWATCH -- "CBS' Major Garrett on Working in Trump's White House of 'Disdain and Deflection'," by The Daily Beast's Lloyd Grove: "'A lot of White Houses have used the deflection part, but none have been as disdainful,' Garrett said over a morning cup of coffee. ... 'Disdainful of the whole set of ground rules, the whole architecture of the briefing, of the interaction with the White House press corps,' Garrett continued. 'The disdain is new. And it comes from Trump, pure and simple.'" <http://thebea.st/2ksqkTO>

TRANSITIONS -- Former Houston Mayor **Annise Parker** has been named president and CEO of Victory Fund and Victory Institute.

SPOTTED: Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and her husband Bruce dining at Gordon Biersch last night.

HOLIDAY PARTY CIRCUIT -- SPOTTED at the America Rising/Definers holiday party last night at AJAX: Matt Rhoades, Joe Pounder, Tim Miller, Colin Reed, Brian Rogers, Ron Kaufman, Ryan Mahoney, Kirsten Kukowski, Danny Diaz, Ryan Williams, Jim Bognet, Michael Ahrens, Michael Reed, Jeff and Riley Bechdel, Kris Anderson, Webber Steinhoff, Alexandra Smith, Mark McLaughlin and Natalie Gillam, Kyle Reliford, Jake Kastan, Jesse Hunt, Matt Gorman, Courtney Alexander, Jeremy Adler, Ryan Coyne, Nathan Brand, Erica Arbetter, Drew Florio, Casey Harper and Jill Barclay.

SPOTTED at last night's Economic Innovation Group's holiday party, held in their Chinatown offices: Steve Glickman, Christen Glickman, John and D'Ann Lettieri, Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), Rep. Nanette Barragan (D-Calif.), Anthony Daniels, Andrew Platt, Chris Slevin, Chad Maisel, Matt Mulder, Reema Dodin, Scott Winship, Craig Gordon, Hadas Gold, Robert Bole, Jared Bernstein, Cathy Koch, Helen Milby, Toby Stock, Jim Kessler, Sonal Shah, Molly Kinder, Will Marshall, Izzy Klein, Susan McCue, Monique Rizer, Brian Diffell, Tom Carpenter, Scott Sinder and Jason Abel.

***** **A message from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates:** With trade in aviation, high tech, and defense, the UAE delivers a \$19 billion trade surplus for the US. These exports support hundreds of thousands of American jobs. They also help the UAE diversify its economy. By working with the US, the UAE has become a center for innovation and opportunity in the Middle East. <http://politi.co/2AZsOU3> *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Joe Pompeo - POLITICO Media
Sent: Tue 5/9/2017 9:58:09 AM
Subject: Morning Media: Rupert Murdoch: 'Nothing's happening at Fox News' — Taking bets on the Paul Berman blackmailer — Bill Clinton, novelist

By Joe Pompeo | 05/09/2017 05:54 AM EDT

With Cristiano Lima

RUPERT MURDOCH GOT AMBUSHED BY THE BBC IN NEW YORK - The mogul declined an interview request, so BBC media editor Amol Rajan waited for him outside the Midtown Manhattan command center of News Corp and 21st Century Fox. Rajan wanted to know if Murdoch is concerned about whether the ongoing Fox News sexual harassment scandal will influence a British media regulator's evaluation of 21CF's bid for the European broadcaster Sky. "Nothing's happening at Fox News," Murdoch insisted. "Fox News is getting record ratings, and so I'm not worried at all." Nothing? Really? "Nothing. ... So, goodbye." [Do watch the full clip.](#)

TIPS AND COMMENTS: jpompeo@politico.com / [@joepompeo](https://twitter.com/joepompeo). **Morning Media** is edited by **Alex Weprin** ([@alexweprin](https://twitter.com/alexweprin) / aweprin@politico.com) and produced with writing/reporting help from **Cristiano Lima** (clima@politico.com / [@ludacristiano](https://twitter.com/ludacristiano)). [Archives](#). [Subscribe](#).

REVOLVING DOOR: MURDOCH MEDIA MOVES - There was a whole bunch of them yesterday. At Fox News, longtime NBC sales vet Marianne Gambelli was named president of advertising sales, joining the network after a five year stint at Horizon Media. 21st Century Fox's new global chief information security officer is Melody Hildebrandt, who will "oversee the protection and risk management for enterprise communications, technologies and assets." At News Corp., meanwhile, Marc Frons has officially been named chief information officer after serving in the role on an interim basis. And News Corp's Wall Street Journal has a new books editor, Christopher Carduff, a publishing consultant at the Library of America who will relocate from Boston to New York to replace Robert Messenger, recently poached by The Weekly Standard.

Elsewhere...

-- **Now we know who Spencer Ackerman left The Guardian for:** He's headed to The Daily Beast as a senior national security correspondent, "covering homeland security, counterterrorism, intel and more... and reuniting with his former colleague Noah Schachtman, who's now the Beast's exec editor," CNN's Brian Stelter [reported last night](#).

-- **Congrats to Morning Media pal/former colleague Steve Kornacki** on being named national political correspondent for NBC News and MSNBC, "a role that will expand his duties and visibility across both networks ... Kornacki will also contribute regularly to political reporting on TODAY and become the primary fill-in host for Hardball with Chris Matthews. In addition, Kornacki will have a prominent role across both networks for all major political programming, including major political event coverage."

NOTES FROM YESTERDAY'S SALLY YATES HEARING - Richard Blumenthal credited the press for Michael Flynn's ouster: "Without the free press telling us a lot of what went on, Michael Flynn might still be sitting in the White House as national security adviser." When James Clapper recounted his frequent interactions with reporters, Sen. John Kennedy sniffed , "I'm sorry about that." Clapper also got some laughs when asked if he'd ever leaked unclassified intelligence to the press: "Unclassified is not leaking." On a more serious note, Clapper and Yates both denied being anonymous sources or authorizing others to be anonymous sources in news reports about the alleged Trump-Russia ties.

BLIND ITEM ABOUT A BLIND ITEM - Which "well-known professor at one of the New York colleges, who is also a columnist at a liberal magazine," were media gossips pointing at yesterday as the "well-known professor at one of the New York colleges, who is also a columnist at a liberal magazine," that writer Paul Berman described in a Tablet magazine article as blackmailing him, in what might very well be the most elaborate blind item ever published? Any guesses?

QUESTION ABOUT SINCLAIR'S \$3.9B TRIBUNE MEDIA ACQUISITION - "The deal has set tongues wagging in Washington as to whether Sinclair, a Maryland-based television station owner that has often pushed right-leaning programming, will try to position itself as a rival to Fox News," POLITICO's Hadas Gold writes . "[D]uring the 2016 campaign, news stories and features favorable to then-candidate Donald Trump ... were distributed to Sinclair stations on a 'must-run' basis. ... Jared Kushner told business executives the campaign had struck a deal with Sinclair for better media coverage ... The group also recently hired Boris Epshteyn, a White House aide who oversaw Trump's television surrogate operation, as chief political analyst. Given those recent decisions, many in Washington wonder if Sinclair has its sights set on Fox."

WHAT IF FRANCE HAD ITS OWN FOX NEWS? Rachel Donadio in The New York Times : "Unlike the presidential campaign in the United States, where hacking of Hillary Clinton that was traced to Russia may have played a role in her defeat by Donald J. Trump, news of the hacking operation in France was met with silence, disdain and scorn. The contrast may have been amplified further by the absence of a French equivalent to the thriving tabloid culture in Britain or the robust right-wing broadcast media in the United States, where the Clinton hacking attack generated enormous negative coverage. 'We don't have a Fox News in France,' said Johan Hufnagel, managing editor of the leftist daily Libération."

MUST READS:

-- "Washington Loves General McMaster, But Trump Doesn't" [Bloomberg View]

-- "A Hidden Hand in the Trump-Russia Drama Owns a Ramen Shop. No, Seriously." [The Daily Beast]

-- "Is The Gig Economy Working?" [The New Yorker]

TRUMP'S NEXT TV INTERVIEW? Lester Holt on May 11. The NBC anchor will sit down

with the president "in an exclusive, wide-ranging, one on one interview from the White House," NBC said yesterday. "The interview will air on Thursday's broadcast of 'NBC Nightly News,' which Holt will anchor from Washington, D.C., and on Friday morning's 'TODAY.'"

WE'D READ THIS EVEN IF IT WASN'T ABOUT ONE OF OUR COLLEAGUES - "[How This Politico Journalist Became One Of Sean Spicer's Least Favorite Reporters](#)," by BuzzFeed's Steven Perlberg: "In the Politico newsroom and across the Washington media, Spicer's battle with [Alex] Isenstadt is notorious. The low-key, bespectacled reporter is widely regarded as one of the press secretary's least favorite members of the media, a badge of honor among his peers. ... The feud came to a head in 2015, when Isenstadt's reporting effectively helped to diminish Spicer's role at the RNC. ... Sources said that even before the debate story, Spicer didn't like Isenstadt, who reported on the kind of internal squabbles at the RNC ... A low-profile figure, Isenstadt eats a grilled cheese at his desk for lunch every day, works late, and largely avoids the Washington party circuit. ... Many in Washington find the Spicer and Isenstadt quarrel somewhat amusing -- particularly given the fact that the reporter sat down with Trump without the press secretary knowing about it."

BOOK BEAT: BILL CLINTON IS WRITING A NOVEL WITH JAMES PATTERSON - It will be the 42nd president's first, as well as the best-selling mass market author's first collaboration with a president. The book, titled "The President is Missing," is a joint effort between Doubleday's Alfred A. Knopf and Hachette's Little, Brown and Company, due on shelves in June 2018 -- "a unique amalgam of intrigue, suspense and behind-the-scenes global drama from the highest corridors of power," according to an announcement yesterday. The Clinton statement is a little too boilerplate-y to reproduce, but here's canned quote from Knopf/Hachette chiefs Sonny Mehta and Michael Pietsch: "The pages we've read to date are riveting, full of intricate plotting and detail." Patterson: "Working with President Clinton has been the highlight of my career."

SOUND BITES:

-- "Ask Sally Yates, under oath, if she knows how classified information got into the newspapers soon after she explained it to W.H. Counsel." [[Donald Trump](#)]

-- "Do something stupid today? Well chin up! You didn't write an entire article quoting a Sean Spicer parody account thinking it was real" [[Ben Howe](#)]

-- "Twitter has 500 million tweets a day. The only way to deal is to pick one news source...and never listen to others." [[Michael Bloomberg](#)]

NYT'S DIGITAL SUBSCRIBER SURGE IN CONTEXT - [via Recode](#) : "For the past six years, Times' digital revenue ... more than doubled to \$442 million. Print-only revenue fell 18 percent to just over \$1 billion in the same period. In 2015 Times' leadership announced that they aimed to hit \$800 million in overall digital revenue by 2020 ... Most of the digital gains are coming from digital subscribers. From 2011 to 2016, money from people who only pay for its online version rose more than five times, or 418 percent, to \$233 million, while print subscription revenue declined 2 percent to \$648 million. Digital even managed to see some

growth in ad spending, while ad spending at the newspaper overall declined 23 percent. Print, however, is still responsible for more revenue than digital, though that gap is narrowing."

RICHARD SIMMONS STRIKES BACK - Fresh off of the presumably unwanted publicity stemming from the hit unauthorized podcast "Missing Richard Simmons," the reclusive fitness guru is suing The National Enquirer, sister publication Radar Online and parent company American Media Inc. Per The Hollywood Reporter : "Simmons is targeting a series of 'cruel and malicious' articles published between June 2016 and March of this year that suggested he was transitioning from a male to a female, including reports of 'shocking sex surgery,' breast implants, hormone treatments and consultations on medical castration. The complaint filed on Monday paints the tabloids' conduct as 'particularly egregious,' a cynical calculation that Simmons wouldn't sue because he wouldn't want to appear as frowning upon the act of transitioning from one gender to another."

SOUNDTRACK: Cock Sparrer, "We're Coming Back"

EXTRAS:

-- Erik Wemple: Tucker Carlson stoked fears of illegal immigration over a Maryland high school rape case. Then the undocumented immigrants were cleared. [WaPo]

-- Fox News has applied for trademark protection on "The Factor," according to a filing with the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office. Bill O'Reilly's show had been known as "The O'Reilly Factor," and the new filing suggests that Fox could keep at least part of that name in its lineup, albeit without O'Reilly.

-- Speaking of O'Reilly: He was at the Mets game last night with Geraldo Rivera.

-- Spotted? Elizabeth Spiers tweets: "I've only met him once so can't say for sure, but to the left of Nicole Kushner Meyer appears to be [Observer publisher] Joseph Meyer here." (Click through and you'll get it.)

-- Jack Shafer: "Oui, Journalists Should Report on Hacked Emails" [POLITICO Magazine]

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/media/tipsheets/morning-media/2017/05/ruPERT-murdoch-nothings-happening-at-fox-news-taking-bets-on-the-paul-berman-blackmailer-bill-clinton-novelist-001269>

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From: Lynn, Tricia
Sent: Wed 1/3/2018 7:47:33 PM
Subject: FW: Holly Greaves Nominated as Chief Financial Officer of EPA

And in the newsroom at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/holly-greaves-nominated-chief-financial-officer-epa>

From: EPA Press Office [mailto:press=epa.gov@cmail19.com] **On Behalf Of** EPA Press Office
Sent: Wednesday, January 03, 2018 2:35 PM
To: Lynn, Tricia <lynn.tricia@epa.gov>
Subject: Holly Greaves Nominated as Chief Financial Officer of EPA

Holly Greaves Nominated as Chief Financial Officer of EPA

WASHINGTON (January 3, 2018) – Today, President Donald J. Trump announced his intention to nominate Holly Greaves as chief financial officer for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Ms. Greaves currently serves as the senior advisor for budget and audit where she provides financial and budgetary counsel to the Agency and Administrator Pruitt. She is a former senior manager at the public accounting firm KPMG LLP, where she provided auditing and advisory services to cabinet-level Federal agencies. Ms. Greaves has extensive knowledge of Federal financial and IT environments, Federal accounting standards, and the laws and regulations applicable to financial management and operations.

“Holly is exceptionally qualified to be our chief financial officer and has been an integral advisor to the Agency as we look to enact meaningful fiscal reforms and eliminate wasteful spending,” **said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt**. “I look forward to working with Holly in her new leadership role at EPA.”

Her nomination is receiving high accolades:

Donna Mclean, former assistant secretary for Budget and Programs, U.S. Department of Transportation and former chair of Amtrak: “A Chief Financial Officer requires a strong foundation in accounting, budgeting, and financial management. Given her extensive experience working on financial statement audits of large, Federal government agencies, Holly Greaves is

uniquely qualified for the role of EPA Chief Financial Officer, and she will certainly be an asset to the Agency as they work to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the way they do business.”

Rick Puckett, former executive vice president and chief financial officer, Snyder’s-Lance, Inc., and member of the Department of Interior Beachhead team for President Trump: “Holly Greaves is an outstanding choice for Chief Financial Officer of the Environmental Protection Agency. Her prior experience as an external auditor, within a Big 4 firm, for large Federal government entities makes her well-suited to respond to the complexities of Federal agencies and their financial management organizations. Holly’s professionalism, knowledge of the Federal Government and acumen within professional accounting will be a tremendous asset to the EPA leadership team.”

Andrew Lewis, adjunct professor, The George Washington University School of Business: “Ms. Greaves has deep knowledge of federal budget and accounting rules, and was able to convey that knowledge in a meaningful and practical way to our students. She has a passion for mentoring and developing people, which will serve her well as the EPA’s Chief Financial Officer.”

Jill Homan, Republican National Committeewoman for Washington, DC and Republican National Committee Executive Committee member: “I met Holly Greaves six years ago through her involvement with the District of Columbia Republican Party. She is an extremely thoughtful and energetic leader who takes the time to listen to disparate viewpoints in an effort to build consensus. I fully expect her to bring these qualities with her should she be confirmed to the role of Chief Financial Officer.”

Elizabeth Schurgin, executive director of the DC Youth Orchestra Program (DCYOP): “I worked with Holly Greaves for several years through her involvement with the DCYOP, a nonprofit that provides group lessons and ensemble opportunities for youth ages 4-18. As a member of our Board’s finance committee, she made many valuable contributions to our organization, from assisting in the selection of a new auditor to reviewing financial statements and other annual reports. Her practical experience and commonsense approach to financial management will be a valuable asset to the EPA.”

Jennifer Anderson, former chief financial officer of LetterLogic, Inc.: “Holly is a valued colleague and hands down a top-notch accountant. Her experience serving a range of public and private sector clients paired with her ingenuity make her extremely well poised to lead the finance function of the EPA efficiently and effectively. I look forward to her service at this important agency.”

Chad Call, director of corporate finance at Intermarine, LLC: “I hold the utmost respect for Holly Greaves and applaud her nomination to the role of Chief Financial Officer for the EPA. Holly is a dedicated professional and a person of genuine integrity. She is intelligent, pragmatic, and gives due attention to detail. I have known Holly as a personal friend (and former colleague) for over 10 years, and I can say that her leadership capacity is well-suited for this role.”

<http://usenvironmentalprotectionagency.cmail19.com/t/d-l-oljhjt-alydlulid-r/>

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Sun 5/28/2017 3:24:14 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD): Tweets pour out as Trump returns to DC -- INSIDE THE WEST WING: POLITICO, WaPo and NYT on WH intrigue -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: Trump's week -- ANDREW KACZYNSKI's wedding

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's PLAYBOOK presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD)
05/28/2017 11:21 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

FROM THE VATICAN at 7:30 this morning -- **@Pontifex**: "I encourage everyone to engage in constructive forms of communication that reject prejudice towards others and foster hope and trust today."

HE'S BACK!! -- **@realDonaldTrump** at **8:10 a.m.**: "Just returned from Europe. Trip was a great success for America. Hard work but big results!" ... at **8:33 a.m.**: "It is my opinion that many of the leaks coming out of the White House are fabricated lies made up by the #FakeNews media." ... at **8:34 a.m.**: "Whenever you see the words 'sources say' in the fake news media, and they don't mention names...." at **8:45 a.m.**: "....it is very possible that those sources don't exist but are made up by fake news writers. #FakeNews is the enemy!" ... at **8:45 a.m.**: "Does anyone notice how the Montana Congressional race was such a big deal to Dems & Fake News until the Republican won? V was poorly covered" ... at **10:43 a.m.**: "British Prime Minister May was very angry that the info the U.K. gave to U.S. about Manchester was leaked. Gave me full details!"

-- **BY THE WAY** ... -- Trump's White House asks for permission to speak without attribution to reporters all the time. Also, just days ago, Trump said he wanted his administration to find the leakers. Now he's saying that leaks "coming out of the White House" are fake. Which one is it?

-- **@anniekarni**: "I've been told a factor in the lack of tweeting abroad overall was the presence of Melania Trump." **Note: *Melania is supposed to move into the White House sometime next month.***

A QUICK SUNDAY BEST -- TRUMP "WIDE OPEN" ON PARIS ACCORDS --
DEFENSE SECRETARY JAMES MATTIS to JOHN DICKERSON on CBS' "FACE THE NATION" -- DICKERSON: "Let me ask you about the Paris climate accords. The president is going to make a decision on those. Tell me about the national security role of climate change." **MATTIS:** "You know, we've - we've obviously got a discussion going on about our policy in this regard. And I was sitting in on some of the discussions in Brussels, by the way, where climate change came up, and the president was open, he was curious about why others were in the position they were in - his counterparts in other nations - and I'm quite certain the president is wide open on this issue as he takes in the pros and cons of that accord."

Good Sunday morning. JUST WONDERING.... Will President Trump head to his golf club in Virginia today to take in the final round of the Senior PGA Championship? We hear it's a possibility.

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- THE PRESIDENT'S WEEK -- The only items listed on the president's schedule so far are remarks at Arlington tomorrow for Memorial Day, meetings with Rex Tillerson and Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc on Wednesday and a travel day Thursday (Trump recently canceled a rally in Iowa, but the travel day still remains on his schedule). Lots of free time -- as of now.

INSIDE THE WEST WING -- Expect more rallies to try to jumpstart Trump's legislative agenda. Expect more loyalists in the West Wing. Expect to see an effort to woo high-profile D.C. lawyers. **BUT, BUT, BUT ...** -- The old crew -- people like Corey Lewandowski -- were sidelined for a reason. Nationwide rallies do not always spark legislative action. Just ask Barack Obama how his rallies worked out for his legislative agenda. And big-time D.C. scandal lawyers will probably tell Trump to do all sorts of things he doesn't want to do, like stop tweeting whatever comes to mind, dump some advisers and normalize White House operations.

WE HEAR -- That the White House has told people on Capitol Hill that Jared Kushner is willing to cooperate extensively with any investigation.

SO MUCH AWESOME PALACE INTRIGUE ... WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW --

-- ANNIE KARNI and JOSH DAWSEY with TARA PALMERI, "Russia scandal casts uncertainty over Kushner's future role: Trump's son-in-law, who's long been above White House infighting, now has to defend his position in the West Wing": "Internally at the White House, according to multiple sources, there is a feeling of resentment among people about Kushner's special status as a family member, and a feeling that it's about time for him to have a turn under the gun. There is also a sense of uncertainty about how long Kushner and Ivanka Trump - who associates say likes, but doesn't love, Washington - are planning to stick it out. Some have noted that they rent their Kalorama mansion, which allows them to keep their options of moving back to Manhattan more open. ...

"Two associates who have spoken to Kushner in recent weeks described him as 'unhappy' and 'miserable,' in part because he has not been able to make the changes he wants to under his father-in-law. Kushner, the source said, has recently seemed resigned to the fact that the internal dysfunction that has defined the first months of Trump's administration is unlikely to pass. 'He's still trying to tell people it will improve but he seems like he was trying to convince himself,' the source said."

<http://politi.co/2qrU2d8>

- WAPO A1, JOHN WAGNER, BOB COSTA and ASHLEY PARKER, "Trump considers major changes amid escalating Russia crisis" (print headline: "Trump may retool his staff"): "White House officials ... are trying to find ways to revive Trump's stalled policy agenda in Congress and to more broadly overhaul the way the White House communicates with the public. That includes proposals for more travel and campaign-style rallies nationwide so that Trump can speak directly to his supporters ...

"[T]he beefed-up operation could include the return of some of Trump's more combative campaign aides, including Corey Lewandowski, who was fired as campaign manager nearly a year ago, and David N. Bossie, who was deputy campaign manager and made his name in politics by investigating Bill and Hillary Clinton for two decades. Both men have been part of ongoing discussions about how to build a war room that have been led in part by chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon. ...

"Other Trump players who have drifted from his orbit in recent months, such as Sam Nunberg, are also being courted to play more active roles, either officially joining the White House or in an outside capacity, working through confidants of the president. 'Go to the mattresses,' a line from the film 'The Godfather' about turning to tough mercenaries during troubled times, has circulated among Trump's friends [***The scene*** <http://bit.ly/2qwn3nq>] ... Underscoring the uncertainty of what lies ahead, some Trump associates said there have been conversations about dispatching Priebus to serve as ambassador to Greece -- his mother is of Greek descent -- as a face-saving way to remove him from the White House. A White House spokeswoman strongly denied that possibility Saturday. ...

"On Thursday, Donald Trump Jr., Eric Trump and Eric's wife, Lara Trump, participated in a two-hour meeting at the RNC headquarters in Washington. ... RNC spokesman Ryan Mahoney ... said the RNC is increasing its efforts to bolster Trump. ... At a recent breakfast in Washington with Ruddy, Lewandowski and Alexandra Preate, a close ally of Bannon, the trio discussed whether Lewandowski and Nunberg could put aside their differences to again rally behind Trump." <http://wapo.st/2r9qnH0>

-- NYT A1, MAGGIE HABERMAN, GLENN THRUSH and JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS: "Trump Returns to Crisis Over Kushner as White House Tries to Contain It" (print headline: "President Faces Growing Crisis On Russia Ties"): "The White House canceled a presidential trip to Iowa in the coming days and was putting together a damage-control plan to expand the president's legal team, reorganize his communications staff and wall off a scandal that has jeopardized his agenda and now

threatens to engulf his family. Mr. Trump's private legal team, led by his New York lawyer, Marc E. Kasowitz, was preparing to meet in Washington to face new questions about contacts between Mr. Kushner and representatives of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. Mr. Trump may meet with Mr. Kasowitz as early as Sunday, and aides have recruited a series of prominent Washington lawyers with experience in political investigations for Mr. Trump to interview in hopes that they might join the legal team.

"Mr. Kushner ... has no plans to step down from his role as senior adviser or to reduce his duties, according to people close to him. Still, there are signs that he is tiring of the nonstop combat and the damage to his reputation. He has told friends that he and his wife, Ivanka Trump, have made no long-term commitment to remain by Mr. Trump's side, saying they would review every six months whether to return to private life in New York. ...

"The president, who has more than 30 million followers on Twitter , has been told by his lawyers to limit his posts. Each one, they argue privately, could be used as evidence in a legal case against him, and the president went through his entire overseas trip without posting a single incendiary message.

"Among those most adamant about limiting Mr. Trump's access to the news media was Mr. Kushner, who has been critical internally of the White House press operation and has sought to marginalize Mr. Spicer, whom he views as too undisciplined to control the president's message. Mr. Kushner has also favored creating a rapid-response team to counter reports like the ones that emerged on Friday." <http://nyti.ms/2r9pSwz>

--WAO A1, "A high-stakes gamble: How Jared Kushner reacted to previous crises," by Michael Kranish and Jonathan O'Connell in New York.
<http://wapo.st/2r9j1Dy>

******* A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD):**
One in two Americans rely on their employers for health care benefits including affordable access to prescription drugs. That's why employers are partnering with PBMs to provide access to effective medications at the most affordable price and improve health outcomes. Learn more at www.affordableprescriptiondrugs.org. *****

WHAT PEOPLE IN THE KNOW ARE SAYING -- The interesting -- and unpredictable -- element of the Jared saga is what happens when he has to testify on Capitol Hill. He'll be put under oath, either in a private setting or public setting, and be forced to testify about his contacts with the Russians. One slip up could land him in hot water. **ALSO:** As we get closer to 2018 -- and midterm elections -- this chaotic environment will become less tenable for Republicans.

BULLETIN from AP at 9:25 a.m.: "BROOKHAVEN, Mississippi (AP) - Police say eight people are dead, including deputy sheriff, after shooting in Mississippi; suspect in custody."

REAX AFTER THE G7 -- Via AFP/Frankfurt am Main: "Europe 'must take its fate into its own hands' faced with a western alliance divided by Brexit and Donald Trump's presidency, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Sunday.

"The times in which we could completely depend on others are on the way out. I've experienced that in the last few days,' Merkel told a crowd at an election rally in Munich, southern Germany. 'We Europeans truly have to take our fate into our own hands,' she added. While Germany and Europe would strive to remain on good terms with America and Britain, 'we have to fight for our own destiny', Merkel went on." <http://bit.ly/2rc7qWj>

MORE SUNDAY BEST -- CHUCK TODD speaks with **DHS SECRETARY JOHN KELLY** on **NBC'S "MEET THE PRESS"** -- **TODD**: "Before I get to the stuff that is in your portfolio, I do want to ask about Jared Kushner, the Washington Post report, the president's son-in-law, about this idea of setting up a backchannel communication while he was a private citizen before the president took the oath. Can you add much to this story and to what the White House has said?" **KELLY**: "I can't. I know Jared. He's a great guy, decent guy. His number one, number one interest, really, is the nation so you know there's a lot of different ways to communicate, backchannel, publicly with other countries. I don't see any big issue here relative to Jared. ... I think any time you can open lines of communication with anyone, whether they're good friends or not so good friends, is a smart thing to do." ...

-- **TODD**: "Do you plan -- you call -- you believe it's treason, to leak some of this stuff, you believe that's treason?" **KELLY**: "I do believe it is. I believe when you leak the kind of information that seems to be routinely leaked - high, high level of classification -- you are telling the --" **TODD**: "And what was leaked on this Manchester bombing you believe maybe even meets the treason standard?" **KELLY**: "I think it's darn close to treason."

CHRIS WALLACE also spoke with **DHS SECRETARY JOHN KELLY** on **"FOX NEWS SUNDAY"** (via Cristiano Lima) -- "While not confirming reports that Kushner discussed with Russian officials how to create secret back channels of communication that escaped potential U.S. monitoring, Kelly said that any attempts to strengthen dialogue with Russia were a positive.

"I don't know if it is true or not, I know it's being reported in the press,' Kelly said on 'Fox News Sunday,' before being told by anchor Chris Wallace that the network had confirmed that the discussion between Kushner and Russian officials had taken place. 'I think that any channel of communication back or otherwise, with a country like Russia is a good thing,' he said. 'It doesn't bother me.'"

-- **SCARY**, from Mattis on CBS's "Face the Nation": **DICKERSON**: "Help people understand what a conflict with North Korea would be like and how it would be different?" **MATTIS**: "A conflict in North Korea, John, would be probably the worst kind of fighting in most people's lifetimes. Why do I say this? The North Korean regime has hundreds of artillery cannons and rocket launchers within range of one of the most densely populated cities on earth, which is the capital of South Korea. We are working

with the international community to deal with this issue. This regime is a threat to the region, to Japan, to South Korea. And in the event of war, they would bring danger to China and to Russia as well. But the bottom line is it would be a catastrophic war if this turns into a combat if we're not able to resolve this situation through diplomatic means."

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS spoke to **REP. ADAM SCHIFF (D-Calif.)** on **ABC'S "THIS WEEK"** -- Schiff on the Kushner-Russia back channel: "If these reports are accurate, right after that campaign, after that intervention, to have the president's son-in-law, a key player within the Trump Organization trying to establish a back channel with the Russians through a Russian diplomatic facility, you have to ask, well, who are they hiding the conversations from? ... I think we need to get to the bottom of these allegations. But I do think there ought to be a review of his security clearance to find out whether he was truthful, whether he was candid. If not then there's no way he can maintain that kind of a clearance."

DANA BASH talks to **SEN. CORY BOOKER (D-N.J.)** on **CNN'S "STATE OF THE UNION"** -- **BASH**: "In the meantime, while there's an investigation, should Jared Kushner's security clearance be revoked or at least suspended?" **BOOKER** : "Well, again, I think we need to first get to the bottom of it. He needs to answer for what was happening at the time. It raises very serious concerns for me and that could be a potential outcome that I seek, but I want to understand, at least hear from, Jared Kushner as well as the administration about what was exactly going on there."

Flashback, 7/16/13 "Trump to host fundraiser for Booker" <http://politi.co/2ruw5q3> (Ivanka and Jared bundled tens of thousands of dollars for Booker.)

THE JUICE ...

-- **SPOTTED IN ASPEN**: Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) yesterday in the hot tub at the St. Regis spa._

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump shakes hands as he arrives to speak to U.S. military troops and their families at Naval Air Station Sigonella on May 27 in Sigonella, Italy. | Evan Vucci/AP Photo

COOL NEW FEATURE -- "Inside Trump's war on regulations: The push to block, rewrite and delay scores of Obama-era rules may be the administration's biggest untold success," by Andrew Restuccia and Nancy Cook with help from seven Politico Pro colleagues: "The president's aides say the goal is 'systemic' change. ... Trump is ... setting bureaucratic wheels in motion that could eventually ax or revise hundreds of regulations as agencies reorient themselves toward unwinding red tape and granting speedier approvals to projects. ... If successful, these efforts could represent the most far-reaching rollback of federal regulations since Ronald Reagan's presidency,

especially if Trump's proposed budget cuts make it hard for a future Democratic president to reaccelerate the rule-making apparatus." ***With an interactive look at the fate of regulations across industries*** <http://politi.co/2qrQw2N>

THE GRADUATION CIRCUIT -- "Defense Secretary Mattis at West Point graduation: 'We Americans are not made of cotton candy'" - AP via Army Times: "He spoke on a sun-drenched day at the military academy's football stadium in New York's Hudson Valley, but spoke of 'storm clouds gathering' around the world. 'Our enemies are watching,' he said. 'By your commitment, you will prove the enemy wrong. Dead wrong.' He drew loud cheers when he added: 'We Americans are not made of cotton candy.'" <http://bit.ly/2rL8gKa>

BOMBSHELL -- "New accuser sues Dennis Hastert, alleging sexual abuse," by the Chicago Tribune's Marwa Eltagouri: "Less than three months before Dennis Hastert's scheduled release from prison, a new accuser has come forward with allegations saying he was sodomized by Hastert decades ago, according to a lawsuit filed in Kendall County on Friday. ...

"The new accuser, referred to in the lawsuit as Illinois resident 'Richard Doe,' is seeking \$50,000 in damages from Hastert and Yorkville Community Unit School District 115 for charges including battery, negligent infliction of emotional distress and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

"The accuser said that during the spring or summer of 1973 or 1974, he stopped by the Game Farm Building, now the Yorkville High School parking lot, to use the bathroom after riding his bike along Game Farm Road. He was 9 or 10 at the time, in fourth grade, the lawsuit alleges. The accuser entered the bathroom and, while sitting on the toilet in a stall, heard a male voice mutter something outside the stall door, according to the lawsuit. The stall door opened, and he alleges he was sodomized." <http://trib.in/2r9tsXK>

REMEMBERING JIM BUNNING - David Cohen: "Jim Bunning, the only person ever elected both to the U.S. Senate and the Baseball Hall of Fame, died late Friday. He was 85 and, according to his family, died of complications from a stroke suffered last year. Bunning, a blunt, conservative Republican who spent a combined 24 years representing Kentucky in the House and Senate, weathered several close elections to earn his place in both institutions. Sometimes, his two professions seemed to go together perfectly.

"I have been booed by 60,000 fans at Yankee Stadium standing alone at the pitcher's mound, so I have never really cared if I stood alone here in Congress as long as I stood by my beliefs and my values,' he said in his farewell Senate speech in December 2010. 'I have also thought that being able to throw a curve ball never was a bad skill for a politician to have.'" <http://politi.co/2qw7rQW>

-- FLASHBACK, per C-SPAN: The moment on March 5, 1996, when then-Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) informed the House that their colleague Jim Bunning got into the Baseball Hall of Fame and gave him a standing ovation: <http://cs.pn/2qoU2Pi> (h/t Howard

Mortman)

REMEMBERING GREGG ALLMAN -- Atlanta Journal Constitution's Melissa Ruggieri: "A seminal voice of Southern rock is gone. Gregg Allman, leader of The Allman Brothers Band, died Saturday at his home in Savannah from complications due to liver cancer. He was 69.

"It's a sad passing," said Peter Conlon, president of Live Nation Atlanta, who knew and worked with Allman for decades. "It's not only the end of Gregg Allman, but between him and Butch (Trucks) gone, the end of The Allman Brothers." <http://on-ajc.com/2rL7tca> ... **Some essential contemporary Allman Bros videos (compiled by Jake):** <http://bit.ly/2rLvIwd> ... <http://bit.ly/2r9XR8g>... <http://bit.ly/2rbXxaU>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD):** As list prices for brand drugs continue to rise, employers are partnering with PBMs to keep drug costs under control. In fact, every dollar an employer invests in a PBM service returns six dollars in savings. Learn more at www.affordableprescriptiondrugs.org. *****

OBAMA ABROAD -- "Close Personal Friends Prince Harry and Barack Obama Hung Out at Kensington Palace: The visit comes a little over a year since the Obamas' last visit" -- Vanity Fair: <http://bit.ly/2rL8MrP> ... **@David_Cameron:** "Great to catch up with my good friend @BarackObama today." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2r95An6>

BONUS GREAT HOLIDAY WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

--**"Writer Evan Ratliff Tried to Vanish: Here's What Happened"** - November 2009 in Wired: "The premise is simple: I will try to vanish for a month and start over under a new identity. ... Wired offered a \$5,000 bounty - \$3,000 of which would come out of my own pocket - to anyone who could locate me between August 15 and September 15, say the password 'fluke,' and take my picture." <http://bit.ly/2r8yiX0>

--**"The Advantage Of Being A Little Underemployed,"** by Morgan Housel in Collaborative Fund: "Tell your boss you found a trick that will make you more creative and productive, and they ask what you're waiting for. Tell them that your trick is taking a 90-minute walk in the middle of the day, and the answer will be no, you need to work. Another way to put this is that a lot of workers have thought jobs, without much time to think." <http://bit.ly/2r4ZiEV>

--**"How a Small Town Is Standing Up to Fracking,"** by Justin Nobel in Rolling Stone: "Grant Township, Pennsylvania, population 741, has become the front line of a radical new environmental movement - and they're not backing down." <http://rol.st/2qrKkXF>

--**"The ACLU's Radical Plan to Fight Jeff Sessions,"** by Ben Wofford in Politico Magazine: "I went canvassing with ex-convicts that are trying to make their case for criminal justice reform." <http://politi.co/2r4NT86>

--**"Andy Slavitt can't stop: How a health care wonk became a rabble-rouser,"** by Stat's Eric Boedman: "From 2015 to early 2017, he had been the head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the government agency that administers President Obama's Affordable Care Act and that provides health insurance for children, the elderly, the disabled, those on low incomes. ... [Now he] has become one of the strongest voices in the fight against the dismantling of the Affordable Care Act." <http://bit.ly/2r1jx7W>

--**"U.S. Veterans Use Greek Tragedy to Tell Us About War,"** by NYT's Bruce Headlam: "The ancient Greeks didn't go to the theater just to be entertained. Aristotle believed that audiences saw themselves reflected in tragic characters and that the very act of watching a character's downfall helped purge them of emotions like pity and fear, a process he called catharsis or, roughly, 'purification.' More than 2,500 years later, a young classics major named Bryan Doerries ... [started] a project he calls Theater of War, which has now staged more than 400 performances [of Sophocles] for veterans across the country." <http://nyti.ms/2rLeE46>

--**"Playing the Shell Game in the Mediterranean":** "Malta poses as a model member of the European Union, but it makes its living off of large European companies seeking to avoid higher tax rates back home. Der Spiegel went to the island nation to investigate, and found a lot of empty offices and empty words." <http://bit.ly/2r4VIKZ> (h/t TheBrowser.com)

--**"Kafka in Vegas,"** by ProPublica's Megan Rose, also published in Vanity Fair: "Fred Steese served more than 20 years in prison for the murder of a Vegas showman even though evidence in the prosecution's files proved he didn't do it. But when the truth came to light, he was offered a confounding deal known as an Alford plea. If he took it he could go free, but he'd remain a convicted killer." <http://bit.ly/2rYUaC6>

--**"Norman Lear: The Comedy Godfather of Television,"** by Michael Paterniti in GQ: "Before TV was a thing (and before it was prefaced by words like 'premium' and 'peak'), Norman Lear had been pushing the boundaries of the small screen for decades. The revolutionary writer and producer who tapped into the hot-to-the-touch culture wars of the '70s with shows like All in the Family, The Jeffersons, and Sanford and Son, is back now, at 94 years young, and may just be the only one out there capable of explaining our times to us." <http://bit.ly/2rpFsag> (h/t Longform.org)

--**"There Aren't Enough Slaughterhouses to Support the Farm-to-Table Economy,"** by Deena Shanker in Bloomberg Businessweek: "Sellers of high-end pork, beef, and chicken agree: there simply aren't enough facilities to humanely and safely kill their animals." <https://bloom.bg/2r6gWdd> (h/t Longreads.com)

--**"Dress Up: What We Lost in the Casual Revolution,"** by G. Bruce Boyer in First Things - per ALDaily.com's description: "It used to be simple: dark suit, white shirt, discreet tie, black oxfords. Then came 'casual Fridays' - and all we lost by dressing down..." <http://bit.ly/2rHytta>

--"**Crushing on Crushers**," by Theodore Dalrymple in City Journal: "Why do intellectuals fall in love with dictators and totalitarians?" <http://bit.ly/2rplj35>

--"**For 40 Years, This Russian Family Was Cut Off From All Human Contact, Unaware of World War II**," by Mike Dash in Smithsonian Magazine: "In 1978, Soviet geologists prospecting in the wilds of Siberia discovered a family of six, lost in the taiga." <http://bit.ly/2rzCk8F>

--"**The Poisoned Generation**," by Vann R. Newkirk II in The Atlantic: "When the blood came back, [Casey] Billieson found out that both of her children were poisoned and likely had been for years. She called the lawyer who'd left his card with her. That phone call began a legal war of attrition that spanned more than two decades, three presidents, and one of the most devastating natural disasters in American history." <http://theatlantic.com/2rYUscce>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Mika and Joe yesterday going for a run in Georgetown, on 33rd and N streets ... John King yesterday at Nats Park on Star Wars day as the Nats beat the San Diego Padres, 3-0.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS - ANDREW KACZYNSKI, reporter at CNN's KFile and a BuzzFeed alum, on Friday married **RACHEL LOUISE ENSIGN**, a banking reporter at the Wall Street Journal. Pool report: "It was decidedly non-scene! Lots of family and old friends ... [celebrating a] wonderful evening at Prospect Park boathouse. The bride and groom were married by the groom's older brother, Steve. There was a reading of a passage from 'All the King's Men' and a reading of the poem 'Ithaka.' A live band played throughout the evening. ... They met in intern group housing in D.C." in 2010. **Wedding pics by Jocelyn Voo of Everly Studios** <http://bit.ly/2rLkv9x> ... <http://bit.ly/2qs2lAc> ... <http://bit.ly/2rbVjIA> ... **Pic of the KFile crew** <http://bit.ly/2qpq25O> **SPOTTED:** Nathan McDermott, Christopher Massie, Kyle Blaine, Matt Dornic, McKay Coppins, Miriam Gottfried, Lindsay Gellman

OBAMA ALUMNI -- "Eleanor Blume, Samuel Houshower" -- N.Y. Times: "The bride and groom both received law degrees from the University of California, Berkeley, where they met. Ms. Blume, 31, is a special assistant attorney general in California, working on the executive team in San Francisco. She graduated from Wellesley College. ... Mr. Houshower, 36, is a legal consultant in San Francisco for nonprofit organizations. From 2010 to 2016, he was an associate counsel to President Barack Obama. He graduated with an associate degree from Deep Springs College in California and with a bachelor's degree from Harvard." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2sa1IS3>

HILLARY ALUMNI -- "Diana Padilla, Eduardo Cisneros": "Mrs. Cisneros, 32, is the

press secretary for Representative Raúl M. Grijalva, Democrat of Arizona. She graduated from California State University, Fullerton, and received a master's degree in business management from EADA Business School in Barcelona, Spain. ... Mr. Cisneros, 33, is a health care program coordinator for the Service Employees International Union in Washington. During the 2016 presidential campaign, he served as a national regional political director for Hillary for America in Brooklyn. He graduated from California State University, Long Beach, and received a master's degree in public policy from the University of Chicago. ... The couple met in 2013 at an inaugural ball given by the California Democratic Party in Washington." <http://nyti.ms/2qw063y>

-- **"Coral Davenport, David Higgins"**: "Ms. Davenport, 41, is a correspondent for The New York Times, covering energy and climate change policy from the newspaper's Washington bureau. She graduated from Smith College. ... The bride is the great-great-great maternal granddaughter of Matthew Fontaine Maury, the astronomer, meteorologist and oceanographer who is known as the Pathfinder of the Seas. Mr. Higgins, 39, is an intelligence analyst at the Energy Department in Washington, where he focuses on foreign nuclear weapons programs. He graduated magna cum laude from James Madison University and received a master's degree in international affairs from Georgetown. ... The couple met in 2005 at a party in Washington at a house from which Mr. Higgins had just moved out and which Ms. Davenport was about to move in. He helped her move in, carrying her boxes and assembling her Ikea furniture." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2qw0Wxp>

-- **"Johanna Barr, Joseph Pikowski"**: "The bride, 29, is a staff editor at The New York Times. She graduated cum laude from Skidmore College and received a master's degree in journalism from Columbia. ... The groom, 28, is a technical solutions manager in Manhattan at Criteo, a global advertising technology company, where he oversees clients' digital advertising campaigns. He graduated cum laude from Tufts. ... The couple met in 2008 during a study abroad program at the British American Drama Academy in London." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2ru6mxP>

-- **"Allison Bernstein, Andrew Garin"**: "The couple both graduated from Brown, magna cum laude. They met in 2005 as high school seniors while waiting for a flight to an event for prospective Brown students. The bride, 30, works in Providence, R.I., as the deputy communications director for Gov. Gina M. Raimondo. ... The groom, 29, studies labor and public economics as a doctoral candidate at Harvard. ... The groom's father [Geoff Garin] is the president of Hart Research Associates, a strategic public opinion firm in Washington." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2r1fKal>

-- **"Alexandra Kennedy, Peter Haviland-Eduah"**: "The bride, 29, works in Baltimore at Under Armour, the footwear and apparel company, where she is the chief of staff to the chief information officer and executive vice president for global operations. She graduated from Princeton. ... The groom, 29, is a senior consultant in the Arlington, Va., office of Deloitte, the professional services firm; he works on projects contracted by the federal government. He is a former aide to Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Democrat of New York. He graduated from Union College and received a master's degree in public policy

from the University of Michigan." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2rLmeM1>

--**Christopher Carofine**, an SEC communications aide and a Hill GOP alum, on Saturday married **Katherine Clubb**, a teacher in Fairfax. The couple met in 2014 and Chris proposed on the banks of the Potomac in Old Town, one of their favorite spots and where they hold court most weekends. Their wedding was at Fort Belvoir Officers' Club in Virginia. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2qvRPN8> ... <http://bit.ly/2qp3VfV>

TRANSITIONS -- Sam Frizell, who covered the 2016 campaign and was on the Hill for Time Magazine, has left the magazine and is headed to law school at Yale. ... **Vicki Ballagh**, formerly a director at the Incite Agency, is joining Airbnb as the communications manager for the office of trust and risk management, an office led by Nick Shapiro, the global head of the office who is the former CIA deputy chief of staff. ... **John Weber** has joined EMILY's List as comms assistant. He formerly was a press intern for Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.

DEBORAH SPRIGGS, who spent "40 years, 1 month and 19 days" working for the House is retiring. "It has been an extraordinarily rewarding experience I will never forget. I have been so fortunate to have worked for so many great Members of Congress including the first female Speaker of the House and to work with so many talented and dedicated professional staff. It has truly been a privilege, working in a Member's personal office, two exclusive Committees (Rules & Appropriations), Leadership and becoming Deputy Clerk; I could not have asked for a better career path."

BIRTHDAYS: Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) is 46 ... Katharine Weymouth, former Washington Post publisher and CEO ... Rudy Giuliani is 74 ... Pelosi alum Diane Dewhirst ... Andy Stone, policy comms. manager at Facebook ... Elisabeth Hasselbeck is 4-0 ... BBC's Tim Willcox is 54 ... Dan Janison of Newsday ... WSJ editor Carrie Melago ... Ry Triplette of Franklin Square Group ... Uber's Josh Gold ... former Rep. Aaron Schock (R-Ill.) is 36 ... Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) is 68 ... Rep. Mark Sanford (R-S.C.) and former Rep. Scott Rigell (R-Va.) are both 57 ... former Rep. Tom Petri (R-Wis.) is 77 ... Lauren Mandelker ... Graham Miller ... Natalie Yezbick, press assistant for Sen. John Cornyn - her office celebrated with cake on Friday ... Isabella Moschen ... Politico's Joseph Kennedy ... Giulia Melucci, VP of PR at Harper's ... Coleen Jose ... Tamara Draut, VP of policy and research for Demos and author of "Sleeping Giant" (hat tip: Kelley McCormick) ... Jonathan Jones is 51 (h/t Pete Madigan) ...

... **Jessica Anderson**, associate director at OMB, is 3-0, celebrating by having their budget out the door (hubby tip: Brandt Anderson, a great Chinook pilot) ... Adam Collins, comms director for Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who celebrated by seeing the Cleveland Indians play the Kansas City Royals yesterday (**pic** <http://bit.ly/2rL16pk>), is 35 ... Christopher Downing ... Alan Khazei is 56 (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Julie Hershey Carr, a principal at Kountoupes Denham (h/t David Peluso) ... David Lobl ... Matthew Pritzker is 35 ... Adam Daniel Pearl, son of Daniel Pearl, is 15 (h/ts Jewish Insider) ... Jim Snyder ... Andrea Wuebker ... Texas Tribune editor in chief Emily Ramshaw ... Jon Black ...

Harry Weinstein ... Marty Kramer ... Joe Paulsen ... Ryan Graham ... Christy Harvey Felling ... Omid Memarian ... Adelle Nazarian, politics and national security reporter at Breitbart and a Fox News alum ... Tim Dowling is 32 ... Ron Jacobi of Bryan Cave ... Peter Cobus ... Robert Walter Harleston is 58 ... Carey Mulligan is 32 (h/t AP)

******* A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD):**

One in two Americans rely on their employers to provide health care benefits. So, employers partner with PBMs to provide access to effective medications at the most affordable price. PBMs drive savings in part by using clinical expertise to identify generic alternatives that achieve the same health outcomes for a lower price. With generics accounting for 89 percent of prescriptions filled in 2015, but only 27 percent of drug costs, that represents a savings of \$227 billion across the U.S. health care system in just one year. Learn more at www.affordableprescriptiondrugs.org. *****

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To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 10/9/2017 11:52:33 PM
Subject: Re: Definers

Just want to stay on this. This would've been a good service to have with everything that was done today. Thank you, Nancy!

Sent from my iPhone

> On Oct 4, 2017, at 2:41 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

>

> Thank you!

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> -----Original Message-----

> From: Grantham, Nancy

> Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2017 2:24 PM

> To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

> Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

> Subject: Re: Definers

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>>

>> Let's get this done!

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Mon 7/10/2017 6:02:49 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Cornerstone adds Inhofe aide — Uber and Franklin Square Group part ways

By Theodoric Meyer | 07/10/2017 01:59 PM EDT

With Aubree Eliza Weaver and Daniel Lippman

CORNERSTONE ADDS INHOFE AIDE: Cornerstone Government Affairs has hired **Anthony "Lazer" Lazarski**, a senior adviser to Sen. **Jim Inhofe** (R-Okla.) on national security, veterans affairs and defense authorization and appropriations. He'll be a senior vice president at Cornerstone focusing on the same issues. He's a retired Air Force colonel who led the Air Force Senate liaison office and worked as a staffer on the Senate Armed Services Committee after leaving the service.

- "Lazer has not only been a dedicated and successful staffer who knows military issues better than anyone, but he has also been my very good friend," Inhofe said in a statement. "He has worked for me for over a decade, both in my personal office and on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and has been successful in getting countless provisions included in our annual defense authorization bills." Lazarski is prevented from lobbying the Senate for a year under Senate ethics rules, so he plans to spend most of his time lobbying the House for his first year. "That's where I expect my focus to be," he said.

UBER AND FRANKLIN SQUARE GROUP PART WAYS: Uber is shedding **Franklin Square Group**, one of its longtime lobbying firms in Washington, according to a disclosure filing. Franklin Square Group - a well-known lobbying firm among tech companies that counts **Apple, Google, Dropbox, Salesforce** and the **Internet Association** among its clients - has lobbied for Uber since 2013, making it the company's first lobbying firm in Washington. Uber continues to retain other lobbying firms, including **Capitol Tax Partners**, the **Doerr Group**, **Federal Hill Group** and **Invariant**, according to disclosure records.

- Other termination filings that caught our eye this morning: The **Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America** is parting ways with **Dentons**, one of the dozens of lobbying firms the powerful trade group has on retainer. And the **Podesta Group** will no longer lobby for the **Financial Industry Regulatory Authority**.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Congress is still away, but PI is back at it. Send all your job news, fly-in tips, and idle gossip to tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow me on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

FROM OUR EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENTS: "A lobbying firm founded by **Mitt Romney**'s 2012 presidential campaign manager is opening a London sister company, headed up by a former top Conservative Party official," **POLITICO Europe's Charlie Cooper** reports. "Washington-based **Definers Public Affairs** will expand its operation to the U.K. later this year, and has appointed **Andrew Goodfellow**, a former director of research for the Conservative

Party, as its vice president. As the firm's London branch, the U.K. Policy Group will assist private sector clients with 'campaign-style research, media monitoring, opinion research, and communications strategy advice,' according to a press statement shared with POLITICO."

- "Definers was founded by Romney ally **Matt Rhoades** and former Republican National Committee Research Director **Joe Pounder**. Its London venture has been launched in partnership with **Trygve Olson**, of **Viking Strategies**, who counseled the European People's Party in the 2009 EU election and worked as a consultant to the Republican Party in the U.S." [Full story.](#)

AIR WARS: The **U.S. Airlines for Open Skies Coalition** is out with a new ad in the long-running battle between **Delta**, **American** and **United** airlines and the Gulf carriers they say are unfairly subsidized by the governments and violating "Open Skies" agreements. "Open Skies agreements make America the leader in global aviation, supporting American jobs and exporters and savings U.S. travelers billions of dollars every year," the ad's narrator says. "But American Airlines, United and Delta want President Trump to limit competition, jeopardizing Open Skies agreements and millions of American jobs they help support." The ad is airing on **Fox News** and **MSNBC**, according to the coalition. **Watch the ad** [here.](#)

WHO PENCE IS DINING WITH: Vice President **Mike Pence** has been holding exclusive dinners with top Republican donors and corporate executives "every few weeks at the vice president's official residence on the grounds of the Naval Observatory in Washington," **The New York Times'** **Kenneth P. Vogel** reports. "Mr. Pence and his wife, Karen, have presided over at least four such soirées, and more are in the works. Each has drawn roughly 30 to 40 guests, including a mix of wealthy donors such as the Chicago hedge fund manager **Kenneth C. Griffin** and the brokerage firm founder **Charles Schwab**, as well as Republican fund-raisers and executives from companies like **Dow Chemical** and the military contractor **United Technologies**."

- **Bob Grand**, a **Barnes & Thornburg** lobbyist who's close with Pence and has raised money for his campaigns, "attended a dinner at the vice president's residence in June. 'There were a lot of folks who, if you were vice president, you would want to meet,' Mr. Grand said. 'Corporate executives, other government leaders, people from past administrations, not just donors.' He added that 'any administration, past and present, has an interest in getting to know folks. If you're an incumbent president and vice president, then that's part of what you do.'" [Full story.](#)

MEANWHILE, IN CALIFORNIA: "The heads of six caucuses in the California Legislature are asking lobbying firms to provide them with demographic data - including race, ethnicity, gender and openly gay or lesbian orientation - on their employees," **The Sacramento Bee's Taryn Luna** reports. "A letter sent late last month to more than 400 lobbying firms, associations and major groups that employ lobbyists begins with an admittance that the Legislature itself needs to do more work to accurately reflect the makeup of California residents. Leaders of the Legislative Asian Pacific Islander, Black, Jewish, Latino, LGBT and Women's caucuses provide the number of members in their own groups. They ask the Capitol's powerful third house to respond with a similar numerical breakdown of staff members at their private companies to help with the 'worthy cause' of making California's workforce representative of its residents." [Full](#)

story.

JOBS REPORT

- The **American Veterinary Medical Association** has added **Kent McClure** as chief of government relations, a new position. He was previously general counsel for the **Animal Health Institute**. The association has also promoted **Ashley Morgan** to director of state advocacy. She was previously an assistant director handling government relations.

- The **Association for Accessible Medicines** has added **Rachel Sher** as deputy general counsel. She was previously a senior policy analyst for FDA.

- **Robert Holleyman**, the former deputy U.S. trade representative, is joining **Crowell & Moring** as a partner. He'll also be the president and chief executive of C&M International, the firm's trade consulting arm. The firm has also hired **Traci Vitek** as a senior policy director in the government affairs group. She was previously a congressional affairs adviser for HHS' inspector general.

- **Jon Jacobs** is joining **Perkins Coie's** Washington office, where he'll be a partner in the antitrust and unfair competition litigation practice. He spent the last 27 years working for DOJ, where he was lead trial counsel in the department's successful case against the **Anthem-Cigna** merger.

- **Blue Star Strategies** has hired **Daniel Erikson** as managing director, heading up the firm's Latin America practice. Erikson previously worked for Vice President **Joe Biden** in the White House as a special adviser for Western Hemisphere affairs. He also advised Vice President **Mike Pence** on Latin American issues while assisting with the transition between administrations.

- **Kate Leone** has been named senior vice president of "government relations and a member of the executive team of **Feeding America**, an anti-hunger organization," per Playbook. "She previously was general counsel for Sen. **Jeanne Shaheen** (D-N.H.)."

- "The **Hispanic Leadership Fund** has hired **Gus Portela** as its director of external affairs and operations," per Playbook. "He previously served as political director and executive director of the **College Republican National Committee**."

ON THE CALENDAR: **Amazon Prime Day** is Tuesday. The company will be giving out free bananas at its community banana stand outside Union Station between 7:30 and 10:30 a.m. **Jay Carney**, Amazon's senior vice president of global corporate affairs, and other Amazonians will be leading sessions in the Dirksen Senate Office Building during the day, followed by an evening reception.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

Crapo Victory Committee (Sen. Mike Crapo, Freedom Fund)

NEW PACs:

Harlan Sponsored (PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

None

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Chesapeake Enterprises: Bridgestone Firestone
Daniel Vajdich: Sergei Leontiev
Defense Consulting Group, LLC: Boyle Transportation
Dentons US LLP: American Pet Products Manufacturers Association
Dentons US LLP: Jackson Health Care
Dentons US LLP: National Heritage Academies
Dentons US LLP: Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)
Dentons US LLP: The Georgia Aquarium, Inc.
Dykema Gossett PLLC: Venus Fashion Inc.
Edens Advisory, LLC: Grindstone Consulting, LLC on behalf of East Penn Manufacturing , Inc.
Franklin Square Group, LLC: Uber Technologies
Hannegan Landau Poersch & Rosenbaum Advocacy, LLC: Viscount Systems, Inc.
Holland & Knight LLP: Akana, Inc.
K&L Gates LLP: HaloNeuroscience
K&L Gates LLP: SiGNa Chemistry
Mr. Mark Kopec: I P Video
Ms. Jennie Aylward: Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon
Natural Resource Results LLC: OceanGate Inc.
Nelson, Mullins, Riley & Scarborough: United Tactical Systems
Podesta Group, Inc.: Financial Industry Regulatory Authority
Van Fleet Associates: Bellus Medical

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-influence/2017/07/10/cornerstone-adds-inhofe-aide-221247>

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Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Tue 10/10/2017 9:46:36 AM
Subject: Re: Definers

Yes - almost there

Sent from my iPhone

> On Oct 9, 2017, at 7:52 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

>

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>>> Let's get this done!

To: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: Ferguson, Lincoln
Sent: Wed 11/8/2017 2:40:29 PM
Subject: Re: FOR APPROVAL: EPA Morning News Highlights 11.8.17

Ah, sorry. They all run together on my phone. My bad

Sent from my iPhone

> On Nov 8, 2017, at 9:39 AM, Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov> wrote:

>

> It's the 2nd one there. I'll move it to the top.

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Ferguson, Lincoln

> Sent: Wednesday, November 8, 2017 9:37 AM

> To: Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>

> Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>

> Subject: Re: FOR APPROVAL: EPA Morning News Highlights 11.8.17

>

> Can you add the USA Today article?

>

> Sent from my iPhone

>

>> On Nov 8, 2017, at 9:29 AM, Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov> wrote:

>>

>> EPA Morning News Highlights 11.8.17

>>

>> Beaumont Enterprise: EDITORIAL: Exxon Mobil/EPA Deal Strikes Fair

>> Balance At a time of increased partisanship and contentiousness in Austin and Washington, it's encouraging to see that reasonable compromise is still possible between environmental regulators and petrochemical plants. An agreement between Exxon Mobil and the Environmental Protection Agency could serve as a model for future disputes that seek the right balance in a modern economy. Exxon Mobil agreed to spend \$300 million to retrofit eight facilities in Texas and Louisiana, including Beaumont, Baytown and Mount Belvieu, to address complaints that it had failed to monitor flaring at those sites. The company also agreed to a \$2.5 million civil penalty with the federal government and Colorado and to spend \$1 million to plant trees in Baytown. It also vowed to reduce the waste gases sent through flares and improve the efficiency of those flares. The case clearly predated the changes in the EPA under President Trump, where the focus has shifted to reducing environmental regulations rather than protecting the environment. Yet the deal was closed with the current leadership of the EPA, so the importance of clean air and water has not been abandoned. Predictably, one environmental group (350.org) called the agreement "a slap on the wrist" for Exxon Mobil. But Luke Metzger of Environment Texas said, "It's a very good settlement."

>> The USA Today: Pruitt Says Alarming Climate Report Will Not Deter

>> Replacement Of Clean Power Plan EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said a newly released comprehensive government report that lays most of the blame for the rise of global temperatures to human activity won't deter him from continuing to roll back the Obama-era Clean Power Plan aimed at combating climate change. "We're taking the very necessary step to evaluate our authority under the Clean Air Act and we'll take steps that are required to issue a subsequent rule. That's our focus," Pruitt said in an interview with USA TODAY Tuesday. "Does this report have any bearing on that? No it doesn't. It doesn't impact the withdrawal and it doesn't impact the replacement." The Trump administration last month began the formal process of dismantling the Clean Power Plan rule intended to curb carbon emissions that contribute to global warming. Pruitt, who sued to block it as Oklahoma's attorney general,

said Congress never gave the EPA the Obama administration the authority to implement such a sweeping regulation. In his first public comments since the Trump Administration released the National Climate Assessment Friday, Pruitt said the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court last year to suspend the regulation until legal challenges are resolved has "created great uncertainty" about the current regulatory framework.

>>

>> Quartz: The EPA Has Approved The Release Of Weaponized Mosquitoes In

>> 20 US States The US Environmental Protection Agency has given its approval for MosquitoMate, a Kentucky-based biotechnology company, to release its bacteria-infected male mosquitoes in several parts of the United States. The EPA approval was first reported by Nature on Monday (Nov. 6), and confirmed by the company. The EPA didn't immediately respond to a request for comment from Quartz. The company's lab-grown mosquitoes, which it calls ZAP males, are infected with the Wolbachia bacteria, naturally occurring in many insects, but not in Aedes aegypti, a vector for viruses such as yellow fever, dengue and Zika. When bacteria-infected males mate with uninfected females, the females produce eggs that don't hatch. In addition, infected mosquitoes are less likely to spread disease. According to Gizmodo, the EPA on Nov. 3 registered MosquitoMate's mosquito as a biopesticide, with a five-year license to sell in 20 different states. Entomologist Stephen Dobson, CEO of MosquitoMate, told Gizmodo that the company could start selling the infected mosquitoes next summer via contracts with government bodies and direct to homeowners, beginning with Lexington, Ky. and expanding to nearby areas like Nashville, Tenn. Quartz reached out to MosquitoMate for comment, and will update when we hear back.

>> Government Executive: EPA Chief's Scientific Advisory Panel Moves Draw

>> Mixed Reactions After weeks of news leaks and controversy, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt on Nov. 2 announced his slate of appointments to three key agency scientific advisory boards. Coming two days after a decision to change membership criteria to disqualify EPA research grant-recipients from also serving on advisory boards, Pruitt's moves generally drew praise from congressional Republicans and industry but brickbats from Democrats and science-related professional groups. "To ensure that EPA is receiving the best independent scientific advice, I am appointing highly qualified experts and scientists to these important committees," Pruitt said. In a fair, open, and transparent fashion, EPA reviewed hundreds of qualified applicants nominated for these committees. Members who will be appointed include experts throughout the environmental stakeholder community, including from NGOs, academia, industry, and state, tribal and local officials. The makeup of the membership speaks to EPA's commitment to science and openness to expertise from a diverse array of perspectives. Those nominees willing to serve have committed to remaining financially independent from EPA grants during their tenures."

>>

>> E&E News: EPA Defends RCRA Settlement With Enviros Federal judges

>> yesterday appeared skeptical of a challenge to a settlement between U.S. EPA and environmentalists that could affect oil and gas regulation. In oral arguments before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, a lawyer for North Dakota argued that the state was unfairly excluded in the lead-up to the deal. In the 2016 consent decree, EPA agreed to consider revising Resource Conservation and Recovery Act standards to include oil and gas waste. EPA has until March 2019 to decide whether the program should be updated and then until July 2021 to complete any update. But North Dakota says the agreement should be tossed because it infringes on states' rights to be consulted about revisions to RCRA, a law for which states often take the lead on implementation. The state also argues that a lower court erred when it blocked North Dakota from intervening in the litigation.

>>

>> E&E News: Natural Gas Threatens Paris Goals — Report Europe risks

>> blowing through its greenhouse gas budget unless it phases out natural gas, according to a new study that finds governments have underestimated the fossil fuel's methane emissions. Natural gas emissions will add 0.6 degree Celsius to global warming and, along with other fossil fuel use, bring Europe past the point of meeting the Paris climate agreement's commitments within a decade, according to a report from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.

>>

>> National Morning News Highlights 11.8.17

>>

>> Reuters: Democrats Win Bitter Virginia Governor's Race In Setback For

>> Trump Democrat Ralph Northam won a bitter race for Virginia governor on Tuesday, dealing a setback to President Donald Trump with a decisive victory over a Republican who had adopted some of the president's combative tactics and issues. Northam, the state's lieutenant governor, overcame a barrage of attack ads by Republican Ed Gillespie that hit the soft-spoken Democrat on divisive issues such as immigration, gang crime and Confederate statues. Trump, who endorsed Gillespie but did not campaign with him, had taken a break from his Asia trip to send tweets and record messages on Tuesday supporting the former chairman of the Republican National Committee. But after the outcome, Trump quickly distanced himself from Gillespie. "Ed Gillespie worked hard but did not embrace me or what I stand for," Trump tweeted. "With the economy doing record numbers, we will continue to win, even bigger than before!"

>>

>> The Washington Post: Trump Strikes At The Heart Of The North Korean

>> Regime With Speech President Trump has said on several occasions that he's willing to talk to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Well, on Wednesday, Trump did — after a fashion. The American president directly addressed his 33-year-old nemesis during his speech to South Korea's National Assembly. This time, Trump didn't call Kim "Little Rocket Man" or use the kinds of rhetorical flourishes that play so well on Twitter. But the words that Trump used will have cut deeper because they strike at the very heart of the Kim regime. If there is one thing that Kim Jong Un has shown that he cannot tolerate, it's personal criticism. "North Korea is not the paradise your grandfather envisioned," Trump said to Kim, who, if he was in Pyongyang, was just 120 miles away. "It is a hell that no person deserves."

>>

>> TRUMP TWEETS

>> Beaumont Enterprise

>> <http://www.beaumontenterprise.com/opinions/editorials/amp/EDITORIAL-Ex>

>> [xon-Mobil-EPA-deal-strikes-fair-12324499.php](http://www.beaumontenterprise.com/opinions/editorials/amp/EDITORIAL-Ex-xon-Mobil-EPA-deal-strikes-fair-12324499.php)

>> EDITORIAL: Exxon Mobil/EPA Deal Strikes Fair Balance By Enterprise

>> Editorial Staff, 11/2/17

>>

>> At a time of increased partisanship and contentiousness in Austin and Washington, it's encouraging to see that reasonable compromise is still possible between environmental regulators and petrochemical plants. An agreement between Exxon Mobil and the Environmental Protection Agency could serve as a model for future disputes that seek the right balance in a modern economy.

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>> The case clearly predated the changes in the EPA under President Trump, where the focus has shifted to reducing environmental regulations rather than protecting the environment. Yet the deal was closed with the current leadership of the EPA, so the importance of clean air and water has not been abandoned.

>>

>> Predictably, one environmental group (350.org) called the agreement "a slap on the wrist" for Exxon Mobil. But Luke Metzger of Environment Texas said, "It's a very good settlement."

>>

>> As with so many of these complex cases, a perfect agreement is probably not possible. This one seems to find the balance needed for people who want a clean environment but also drive cars and use plastics.

>>

>> The reality is that those industries will produce some level of pollution. It should be as low as possible and never constitute a threat to public health. But our air and water will never be as pure as they were before the Mayflower Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock.

>>

>> For the next several decades at least, oil and natural gas will be needed to fuel our economy before

wind and solar power take over - if they ever do. Agreements like this will help manage the transition.

>> The USA Today

>> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/11/08/pruitt-says-al>

>> arming-climate-report-not-deter-replacement-clean-power-plan/839857001

>> / Pruitt Says Alarming Climate Report Will Not Deter Replacement Of

>> Clean Power Plan By Ledge King, 11/8/17

>>

>> WASHINGTON — EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said a newly released comprehensive government report that lays most of the blame for the rise of global temperatures to human activity won't deter him from continuing to roll back the Obama-era Clean Power Plan aimed at combating climate change.

>>

>> "We're taking the very necessary step to evaluate our authority under the Clean Air Act and we'll take steps that are required to issue a subsequent rule. That's our focus," Pruitt said in an interview with USA TODAY Tuesday. "Does this report have any bearing on that? No it doesn't. It doesn't impact the withdrawal and it doesn't impact the replacement."

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>> The Trump administration last month began the formal process of dismantling the Clean Power Plan rule intended to curb carbon emissions that contribute to global warming. Pruitt, who sued to block it as Oklahoma's attorney general, said Congress never gave the EPA the Obama administration the authority to implement such a sweeping regulation.

>>

>> In his first public comments since the Trump Administration released the National Climate Assessment Friday, Pruitt said the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court last year to suspend the regulation until legal challenges are resolved has "created great uncertainty" about the current regulatory framework.

>>

>> The EPA is in the midst of drafting a replacement rule that will have to be as legally defensible as the very rule targeted for elimination as environmental groups are already threatening legal action.

>>

>> "Our job is to administer statutes," Pruitt said, explaining the limits of what EPA can do. "We have to act (based) on the authority given to us by Congress."

>>

>> President Trump has dismissed climate change as a "hoax" perpetrated by the Chinese to gain a competitive edge over the United States. A champion of the coal industry, Trump has followed through on his vow to undo the climate change agenda implemented under Obama by pulling out of the Paris Accord and withdrawing the Clean Power Plan.

>>

>> The Environmental Protection Agency, under Pruitt's direction, has been at the forefront of that effort.

>>

>> Pruitt's assertion that nothing has changed because of the climate report is not surprising given his steadfast opposition to the Clean Power Plan. Still, his position in the wake of what environmentalists see as powerful evidence of human-caused climate change is disappointing to critics of the administration.

>>

>> David Doniger, a climate change expert with the Natural Resources Defense Council, criticized the EPA administrator for abandoning the Obama-era rule, saying the Supreme Court has "unequivocally" recognized EPA's authority to curb carbon pollution under the Clean Air Act.

>>

>> "The National Climate Assessment has sounded a five-alarm fire bell, and Scott Pruitt pretends he can't hear it," he said. "The assessment shows unequivocally that carbon pollution is causing dangerous climate change and that our future depends on whether we cut that pollution."

>>

>> The release last week of the federally mandated report prepared by the nation's top scientists every four years for the president, the Congress and the public concludes, "based on extensive evidence, that it is extremely likely that human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century."

>>

>> Pruitt Tuesday downplayed the importance environmental groups have placed on the report, saying

the assessment is part of the ongoing debate between scientists over the causes of and responses to warming temperatures.

>>

>> "Obviously the climate is changing and has always changed, (and) humans contribute to that. Measuring with exact precision is very challenging," he said. "So I think the report (is) good to encourage an open dialogue on this."

>>

>> One of the report's authors, climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe, boiled down the findings in a tweet:

>>

>> The report concluded that global atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration has now passed 400 parts per million, a level that last occurred about 3 million years ago, when both global average temperature and sea level were significantly higher than today.

>>

>> The only solution to the problem is to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide, emitted globally, the report said.

>>

>> Hundreds of scientists from 13 federal agencies assessed more than 1,500 scientific studies and reports to produce the paper. The National Academy of Sciences also peer-reviewed it before release.

>>

>> Other findings include:

>>

>> —Global average sea level has risen by about 7-8 inches since 1900, with almost half (about 3 inches) of that rise occurring since 1993.

>>

>> —Global average sea levels are expected to continue to rise — by at least several inches in the next 15 years and by 1-4 feet by 2100. A rise of as much as 8 feet by 2100 cannot be ruled out.

>>

>> —Heavy rainfall is increasing in intensity and frequency globally and across the United States and is expected to continue to increase.

>>

>> —The rate of daily tidal flooding is accelerating in more than 25 Atlantic and Gulf Coast cities.

>>

>> —Heat waves have become more frequent in the United States since the 1960s, while extreme cold temperatures and cold waves are less frequent.

>>

>> —The rate of large forest fires in the western United States and Alaska has increased since the early 1980s and is projected to further increase.

>>

>> —Annual trends toward earlier spring melt and reduced snowpack are already affecting water resources in the western United States.

>> Quartz

>> [https://qz.com/1123456/the-epa-has-approved-the-release-of-weaponized-](https://qz.com/1123456/the-epa-has-approved-the-release-of-weaponized-mosquitoes-in-20-us-states/)

>> mosquitoes-in-20-us-states/ The EPA Has Approved The Release Of

>> Weaponized Mosquitoes In 20 US States By Echo Huang, 11/8/17

>>

>> The US Environmental Protection Agency has given its approval for MosquitoMate, a Kentucky-based biotechnology company, to release its bacteria-infected male mosquitoes in several parts of the United States.

>>

>> The EPA approval was first reported by Nature on Monday (Nov. 6), and confirmed by the company. The EPA didn't immediately respond to a request for comment from Quartz.

>>

>> The company's lab-grown mosquitoes, which it calls ZAP males, are infected with the Wolbachia bacteria, naturally occurring in many insects, but not in *Aedes aegypti*, a vector for viruses such as yellow fever, dengue and Zika. When bacteria-infected males mate with uninfected females, the females produce eggs that don't hatch. In addition, infected mosquitoes are less likely to spread disease.

>>

>> According to Gizmodo, the EPA on Nov. 3 registered MosquitoMate's mosquito as a biopesticide, with a five-year license to sell in 20 different states. Entomologist Stephen Dobson, CEO of MosquitoMate, told Gizmodo that the company could start selling the infected mosquitoes next summer via contracts with government bodies and direct to homeowners, beginning with Lexington, Ky. and expanding to nearby areas like Nashville, Tenn. Quartz reached out to MosquitoMate for comment, and will update when we hear back.

>>

>> The permitted states include mostly those similar weather conditions to Kentucky, New York, and California, states where the company earlier conducted trials—as well as Washington DC. In April, the company began a 12-week field trial that involved releasing 20,000 male *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in Stock Island, in the Florida Keys. The male mosquitoes don't bite, which should make the release of these insects sound less alarming.

>>

>> Other countries have been using lab-produced mosquitoes to reduce their populations. In China's southern city of Guangzhou, scientists used a similar method to control the insects' population by building a mosquito factory that produced millions of Wolbachia-infected male mosquitoes last year. Brazil has used the bacteria-infected mosquitoes in its campaign against the Zika virus.

>>

>> Brazil has also tried the use of a different kind of lab mosquito, one that is genetically modified, which has faced resistance in the US.

>> Government Executive

>> <http://www.govexec.com/management/2017/11/epa-chiefs-scientific-advisory-panel-moves-draw-mixed-reactions/142365/>

>> EPA Chief's Scientific Advisory Panel Moves Draw Mixed Reactions By

>> Charles Clark, 11/7/17

>>

>> After weeks of news leaks and controversy, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt on Nov. 2 announced his slate of appointments to three key agency scientific advisory boards.

>>

>> Coming two days after a decision to change membership criteria to disqualify EPA research grant-recipients from also serving on advisory boards, Pruitt's moves generally drew praise from congressional Republicans and industry but brickbats from Democrats and science-related professional groups.

>>

>> "To ensure that EPA is receiving the best independent scientific advice, I am appointing highly qualified experts and scientists to these important committees," Pruitt said. In a fair, open, and transparent fashion, EPA reviewed hundreds of qualified applicants nominated for these committees. Members who will be appointed include experts throughout the environmental stakeholder community, including from NGOs, academia, industry, and state, tribal and local officials. The makeup of the membership speaks to EPA's commitment to science and openness to expertise from a diverse array of perspectives. Those nominees willing to serve have committed to remaining financially independent from EPA grants during their tenures."

>>

>> The three panels are the Board of Scientific Counselors, the Clean Air Science Advisory Committee and the Science Advisory Board.

>>

>> The new grant rules are designed to "strengthen member independence," "increase state, tribal and local government participation," "enhance geographic diversity" and "promote fresh perspectives," Pruitt said in his Oct. 31 directive.

>>

>> Reacting to the new grants policy, Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, chairman of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, said Pruitt "is restoring the EPA advisory boards to their original purpose – to provide the administrator objective advice on science and technology policies. For eight years, the EPA has had science boards filled with members who have had conflicts of interest."

>>

>> Smith's committee earlier this year passed a bill to reform the agency's advisory boards along similar

lines. "It's impossible for these boards to be fair and balanced in their advice and their decisions when many board members are receiving grants and funds from the EPA."

>>

>> But committee Democrats on Nov. 3, along with counterparts on the Energy and Commerce panel, sent Pruitt a letter "strongly opposing the directive he issued imposing severe limitations on the scientific advice and expertise that the agency's science advisory committees may receive. The directive would bar scores of the nation's most qualified scientists from sitting on these committees. It also appears to violate the law regulating federal advisory committees," wrote the group led by science panel ranking member Rep. Bernice Johnson, D-Texas, calling on Pruitt to withdraw the directive. "In reality, the measure will seriously diminish the scientific expertise the EPA receives. At the same time, the order will increase the number of industry representatives and industry-funded scientists providing advice to the EPA."

>>

>> The American Association for the Advancement of Science also denounced Pruitt's changes. "This EPA decision is motivated by politics, not the desire for quality scientific information," wrote its CEO, former Rep. Rush Holt, D-N.J. "Federal agencies should recognize and enable input of scientific and technical information that represents the best available evidence. The government must ensure that its science advisers possess the requisite scientific, medical and technical expertise to inform agency policies."

>>

>> He cited existing conflict-of-interest guidelines at EPA and the National Institutes of Health. "Leading scientific experts who are conducting environmental science research should not be prohibited from participating on EPA science adviser boards and committees if they have met the appropriate financial conflict of interest policy," he added.

>>

>> But Pruitt's moves were applauded by the American Chemistry Council. "The changes.... will help ensure EPA's scientific review panels are well balanced with perspectives from qualified scientists of diverse backgrounds and that board members are free of any disqualifying conflicts of interest," CEO Cal Dooley said. He praised the appointments of his council's own chemist Kimberly White to EPA's Science Advisory Board and the naming of his staff toxicologist Rick Becker to the Board of Scientific Counselors.

>> E&E News

>> <https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2017/11/08/stories/1060065891>

>> EPA Defends RCRA Settlement With Enviro By Ellen Gilmer, 11/8/17

>>

>> Federal judges yesterday appeared skeptical of a challenge to a settlement between U.S. EPA and environmentalists that could affect oil and gas regulation.

>>

>> In oral arguments before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, a lawyer for North Dakota argued that the state was unfairly excluded in the lead-up to the deal.

>>

>> In the 2016 consent decree, EPA agreed to consider revising Resource Conservation and Recovery Act standards to include oil and gas waste. EPA has until March 2019 to decide whether the program should be updated and then until July 2021 to complete any update.

>>

>> But North Dakota says the agreement should be tossed because it infringes on states' rights to be consulted about revisions to RCRA, a law for which states often take the lead on implementation. The state also argues that a lower court erred when it blocked North Dakota from intervening in the litigation.

>>

>> "This case is not about dates; it's about a process — and an incomplete one at that," Greenberg Traurig LLP attorney Paul Seby, representing the state, told the court.

>>

>> Seby's remark was in response to EPA's repeated argument that the settlement doesn't harm North Dakota because it merely sets out a schedule for considering a regulatory change.

>>

>> EPA has vigorously defended the RCRA deal, adopting a position somewhat discordant with Administrator Scott Pruitt's ongoing efforts to crack down on settlements with environmental groups.

Agency lawyers noted in a recent legal filing that settlements are often necessary when groups sue EPA over missing a statutory deadline and "the agency is left with few defenses, if any" (Energywire, Oct. 27).

>>

>> North Dakota sought to intervene in the original district court proceedings that led to the settlement, but the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia rejected the request. The state appealed to the D.C. Circuit after the settlement was reached last December.

>>

>> 'You have a seat at that table'

>>

>> The three-judge panel hearing the case yesterday seemed skeptical of North Dakota's claims that the settlement harms the state. Judge Nina Pillard, an Obama appointee, noted that the state would have plenty of opportunity to weigh in on any regulatory changes if EPA moves forward on an update to RCRA programs.

>>

>> "You have a seat at that table," she said. "Nobody's excluding you from that."

>>

>> George W. Bush appointee Judge Brett Kavanaugh made similar observations: "Just to put a date in there is not excluding you from what is going to transpire."

>>

>> Judge Sri Srinivasan, an Obama appointee, zeroed in on the wording of the decree, asking Seby whether it would assuage North Dakota's concerns if the court interpreted the document to imply a requirement that EPA comply with RCRA consultation obligations.

>>

>> Seby maintained that states have a right to be consulted even before EPA begins considering whether RCRA updates are needed. The consent decree short-circuited that process, he said.

>>

>> Justice Department attorney Robert Lundman, representing EPA, responded that the consent decree does not change any rights states have in the process.

>>

>> "There's nothing in the consent decree that rewrites those terms," he said.

>>

>> Environmental Integrity Project attorney Adam Kron argued that North Dakota has not been harmed by the settlement because it is merely concerned about the possibility of adverse regulation — which courts have previously rejected as a basis for legal standing.

>>

>> EIP and a coalition of environmental groups filed the original lawsuit against EPA in May 2016.

>> E&E News

>> <https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/11/08/stories/1060065911>

>> Natural Gas Threatens Paris Goals — Report By Arthur Nelsen, 11/8/17

>>

>> Europe risks blowing through its greenhouse gas budget unless it phases out natural gas, according to a new study that finds governments have underestimated the fossil fuel's methane emissions.

>>

>> Natural gas emissions will add 0.6 degree Celsius to global warming and, along with other fossil fuel use, bring Europe past the point of meeting the Paris climate agreement's commitments within a decade, according to a report from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.

>>

>> Keeping the Paris Agreement's pledge of limiting warming to less than 2 C would require Europe to phase out all fossil fuels — including gas — by 2035 and decrease emissions by 12 percent each year.

>>

>> Instead, the European Union has accelerated the number of new projects

>> and considers gas a "bridge" to expand renewables further (Arthur

>> Nelsen, London Guardian, Nov. 7). — AAA Reuters

>> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election/democrats-win-bitter-vi>

>> ginia-governors-race-in-setback-for-trump-idUSKBN1D71D7

>> Democrats Win Bitter Virginia Governor's Race In Setback For Trump By

>> John Whitesides, 11/8/17

>>

>> WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Democrat Ralph Northam won a bitter race for Virginia governor on Tuesday, dealing a setback to President Donald Trump with a decisive victory over a Republican who had adopted some of the president's combative tactics and issues.

>>

>> Northam, the state's lieutenant governor, overcame a barrage of attack ads by Republican Ed Gillespie that hit the soft-spoken Democrat on divisive issues such as immigration, gang crime and Confederate statues.

>>

>> Trump, who endorsed Gillespie but did not campaign with him, had taken a break from his Asia trip to send tweets and record messages on Tuesday supporting the former chairman of the Republican National Committee.

>>

>> But after the outcome, Trump quickly distanced himself from Gillespie.

>>

>> "Ed Gillespie worked hard but did not embrace me or what I stand for," Trump tweeted. "With the economy doing record numbers, we will continue to win, even bigger than before!"

>>

>> At his victory party, Northam told supporters the sweeping Democratic win in Virginia sent a message to the country.

>>

>> "Virginia has told us to end the divisiveness, that we will not condone hatred and bigotry, and to end the politics that have torn this country apart," Northam said.

>>

>> The Virginia race highlighted a slate of state and local elections that also included a governor's race in New Jersey, where Democrat Phil Murphy, a former investment banker and ambassador to Germany, defeated Republican Kim Guadagno for the right to succeed Republican Chris Christie.

>>

>> Murphy had promised to be a check on Trump in Democratic-leaning New Jersey. Guadagno, the lieutenant governor, was hampered by her association with the unpopular Christie.

>>

>> BOOST FOR DEMOCRATS

>>

>> Murphy's win and the Northam victory in Virginia, a state Democrat Hillary Clinton won by 5 percentage points in the 2016 presidential election, provided a much-needed boost for national Democrats who were desperate to turn grassroots resistance to Trump into election victories.

>>

>> Democrats had already lost four special congressional elections earlier this year.

>>

>> But a strong turnout in the Democratic-leaning northern Virginia suburbs of Washington helped propel Northam, who in the end won relatively easily. With nearly all precincts reporting, he led by a 53 percent to 45 percent margin.

>>

>> Exit polls in Virginia showed that one-third of the voters went to the polls to oppose Trump, and only 17 percent went to support him.

>>

>> Slideshow (25 Images)

>> Democrats also swept the other top statewide Virginia races, winning the offices of lieutenant governor and attorney general, and gained seats in the Virginia House of Delegates. Democrat Danica Roem beat a long-time Republican incumbent to become the first transgender person to win a state legislative race.

>>

>> "This is a comprehensive political victory from statehouse to courthouse. Thank you Donald Trump!" Democratic U.S. Representative Gerald Connolly of Virginia told Northam's supporters at a victory party in northern Virginia.

>>

>> In Virginia, Democrats had worried that if Gillespie won, Republicans would see it as a green light to emphasize divisive cultural issues in their campaigns for next year's elections, when all 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and 33 of the U.S. Senate's 100 seats come up for election. Republicans now control both chambers.

>>

>> Gillespie, speaking to crestfallen supporters in Richmond, Virginia, said he had run a "very policy-focused campaign."

>>

>> But voters in Arlington County - a suburban Democratic stronghold bordering Washington - said national politics were important to their votes.

>>

>> "Trump talks about draining the swamp, but Gillespie kind of is the swamp," said Nick Peacemaker, who works in marketing and considered himself a Republican until Trump won the party's presidential nomination.

>>

>> Peacemaker said Gillespie seemed to shift closer to Trump's policies after securing the Republican gubernatorial nomination.

>>

>> In local races across the country, Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio in New York and Marty Walsh in Boston both easily won re-election. Voters were also picking mayors in Detroit, Atlanta, Seattle and Charlotte, North Carolina.

>> The Washington Post

>> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/trump-strikes-at-the-heart-of-the>

>> -north-korean-regime-with-speech/2017/11/08/8b1d6d48-c309-11e7-9922-41

>> 51f5ca6168_story.html Trump Strikes At The Heart Of The North Korean

>> Regime With Speech By Anna Fifield, 11/8/17

>>

>> TOKYO — President Trump has said on several occasions that he's willing to talk to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Well, on Wednesday, Trump did — after a fashion.

>>

>> The American president directly addressed his 33-year-old nemesis during his speech to South Korea's National Assembly. This time, Trump didn't call Kim "Little Rocket Man" or use the kinds of rhetorical flourishes that play so well on Twitter.

>>

>> But the words that Trump used will have cut deeper because they strike at the very heart of the Kim regime.

>>

>> If there is one thing that Kim Jong Un has shown that he cannot tolerate, it's personal criticism.

>>

>> "North Korea is not the paradise your grandfather envisioned," Trump said to Kim, who, if he was in Pyongyang, was just 120 miles away. "It is a hell that no person deserves."

>>

>> Kim Il Sung, who is revered like a god in North Korean propaganda, established the country in 1948 as a "socialist paradise" of free housing, health care, and education where people would want for nothing. Kim Jong Un claims his legitimacy to be the leader as the direct descendant of this quasi-deity.

>>

>> Trump devoted a large part of his address to detailing the human rights abuses that the Kims have committed in North Korea, filling his speech with words like "twisted," "sinister," "tyrant," "fascism" and "cult."

>>

>> "I wanted to stand up from my seat and shout 'yahoo!'" said Lee Hyeon-seo, an escapee from North Korea who was sitting in the assembly hall Wednesday during Trump's address. "We just don't hear people talking about North Korea in this way in South Korea, so I was very emotional during the speech. I was very impressed."

>>

>> Trump noted the slave-like conditions that North Korean workers endure, the malnutrition among

children, the suppression of religion, and the forced-labor prison camps where North Koreans endure “torture, starvation, rape, and murder on a constant basis.”

>>

>> Other advocates for North Koreans expressed hope that Trump’s remarks would remind the outside world that the country is not just home to a dictator with nuclear weapons but 25 million people who suffer under him.

>>

>> “President Trump spoke about human rights in North Korea more than any other previous U.S. president,” said Jeong Kwang-il, who was held as a political prisoner in North Korea and now runs the “No Chain for North Korea” human rights group in Seoul. “I’m hopeful that American policy toward North Korea will focus more on improving human rights there.”

>>

>> The president did not mince his words about the way the Kim regime has managed to retain its grip on the populace.

>>

>> “North Korea is a country ruled as a cult. At the center of this military cult is a deranged belief in the leader’s destiny to rule as parent protector over a conquered Korean Peninsula and an enslaved Korean people,” he said.

>>

>> The success of South Korea discredited “the dark fantasy at the heart of the Kim regime,” Trump said.

>>

>> It is hard to exaggerate the reverence with which North Koreans are forced to treat the Kim family. Every home and all public buildings must display portraits of Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il, that must be cleaned only with a special cloth. North Koreans must bow at monuments to the leaders and sing songs celebrating their supposedly legendary feats.

>>

>> There is no escaping the Kims and the narrative that they have created a utopia that is the envy of the world.

>>

>> So to suggest that the regime is founded on a “fantasy” and that the country is something other than a socialist paradise amounts to heresy in North Korea.

>>

>> “This speech made the ‘axis of evil’ speech look friendly,” said John Delury, a professor of international relations at Yonsei University in Seoul, referring to President George W. Bush’s 2002 State of the Union speech, in which he included North Korea as a country seeking weapons of mass destruction.

>>

>> “That sent a signal to Pyongyang that the Americans are not open to changing their relationship with North Korea and that the president was deeply hostile and ideologically hostile to them.”

>>

>> But others saw an opening from Trump, with his suggestion there was a way out of the current quagmire. “Despite every crime you have committed against God and man . . . we will offer a path to a much better future,” Trump said, saying that this would require total denuclearization.

>>

>> The president publicly offered a “diplomacy exit ramp” to the Kim regime, Victor Cha, tipped to be Trump’s nominee for ambassador to South Korea, wrote on Twitter.

>>

>> At a news conference with South Korean President Moon Jae-in the previous day, Trump urged North Korea “to come to the table” and “do the right thing, not only for North Korea but for humanity all over the world.”

>>

>> At recent meetings near Geneva and in Moscow, Pyongyang’s representatives have signaled an interest in talks with the United States — as long as those talks are not about denuclearization, a non-starter for Washington.

>>

>> The regime in Pyongyang is likely to react angrily to Trump’s speech.

>>

>> After Trump threatened at the U.N. General Assembly in September to “totally destroy” North Korea and mocked Kim as “Rocket Man,” Kim took the unprecedented step of releasing a statement in his own name, calling Trump a “mentally deranged U.S. dotard” who would “pay dearly” for his threats.

>>

>> At the same time, North Korea’s foreign minister said the country might detonate a nuclear device over the Pacific.

>>

>> A U.N. commission of inquiry once charged that the blame for North Korea’s human rights abuses went all way to the top of the leadership, leading to calls for Kim Jong Un to be referred to the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity.

>>

>> That prompted North Korean officials to respond publicly to questions about human rights conditions in a way they had not before — a clear attempt to defend the dignity of their leader.

>>

>> “North Korea tends to react sensitively to criticism in human rights,” said Cheong Seong-chang, director of the unification strategy program at the Sejong Institute, a private think tank in South Korea.

>>

>> He predicted that the response would be especially sharp because of the time that Trump spent talking about North Korea and the detail he went into, plus the president’s repeated calls for the world to isolate the country.

>>

>> “North Korea is highly likely to take Trump’s address as a declaration of war and call for a holy war of its own against the U.S.,” Cheong said.

>> TRUMP TWEETS

>> [cid:image001.png@01D35874.163E5230]

>> [cid:image002.png@01D35874.163E5230]

>>

>> <image001.png>

>> <image002.png>

>> <EPA Morning News Highlights 11.8.17.docx>

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Jackie Toth
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:59:19 PM
Subject: Inquiry re: Whitehouse/Harris letter on Definers

Hi all,

Can the EPA please comment on the inquiry from Whitehouse and Harris today with concerns over conflicts of interest in the no-bid contract with Definers Public Affairs? Can the agency be specific on what services the firm is providing for the agency? Will the EPA be responding by Thursday as requested?

Deadline is no later than 3:15pm today.

Thanks all,
Jackie

Jackie Toth
CQ Legal
Energy & Environment Reporter/Analyst
O: 202-650-6518
C: 610-428-2276
@JackieTothDC

This e-mail may contain confidential material. If you are not an intended recipient, please notify the sender and delete all copies. It may also contain personal views which are not the views of CQ Roll Call or its owner, The Economist Group. We may monitor e-mail to and from our network. For company information go to <http://legal.economistgroup.com>.

To: Fimrite, Peter[PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 2/12/2018 9:29:51 PM
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Here is another interview you can pull from.

•<http://news3lv.com/news/local/epa-chief-scott-pruitt-goes-one-on-one-with-news-3>

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 4:27 PM
To: 'Fimrite, Peter' <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

In terms of these additional questions, we have addressed them in interviews with The New York Times and CBS News and you can pull your answers from them.

•<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/02/podcasts/the-daily/scott-pruitt-epa.html>

•<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/scott-pruitt-talks-with-major-garrett-full-interview/>

There was a lot of work from various people to get you the answers to your questions. We look forward to reading your story!

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 4:21 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Any chance I could talk to Scott Pruitt? I need him to explain his philosophy, why he is doing what he is doing, ie: how the EPA had been weaponized in the past to choose winners and

losers; how superfund sites have languished because of a lack of decision making; that climate change cannot be regulated because it was not part of the original mission; why it is important for him to streamline the agency. Even a statement from him or a series of quotes I could use along these lines would be helpful if he's not available.

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 10:00 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

The answers with my names next to them are on the record. The tea leaves is not but let me see if I can get that approved. Does that work?

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 12:58 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every employee, to EPA’s Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words “climate change” were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **“Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focused on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **“Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **“No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **“We don’t discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9 Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: @pfimrite

To: Biesecker, Michael[MBiesecker@ap.org]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:05:06 PM
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Biesecker, Michael [mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:02 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Julie and Michael -

Definers says its contract with EPA has been canceled. Do you wish to update Jahan's statement from yesterday?

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 5:10 PM
To: Biesecker, Michael <MBiesecker@ap.org>; Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Adding Julie Pace, again. We have answered your questions with the following on-the-record statements.

“A similar security sweep was done for EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA’s Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

“Please ask your source, who apparently has access to the database of EPA’s expenditures.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 5:05 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Also confirming that you decline to comment on the specific questions in yellow below ...

From: Biesecker, Michael
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:27 PM
To: 'Wilcox, Jahan' <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Jahan,

Again, we are willing to include the details of the similar spending under Lisa Jackson, but we don't have immediate access to EPA's records. Please provide the details of the spending to which you refer. Otherwise, we will be left to say we couldn't immediately verify the charge you claim. Could you at least provide the date, amount and contractor so we can try to check it out?

Also, just to clarify, is it you on-the-record contention that Pruitt in no way requested the bug sweep, but that this was an independent decision made solely by the EPA Protective Service Detail? Can you say concretely whether the administrator was even aware of the decision?

Thanks,

Michael

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:16 PM
To: Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>; Biesecker, Michael <MBiesecker@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Julie and Michael – below are the answers in bold.

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:05 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Jahan,

Could you please clarify how electronic surveillance would potentially imperil Administrator Pruitt's physical security?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA’s Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Also, we have not seen and, depending on the amount, don't have access to what was spent on a bug sweep under Lisa Jackson, but I'm interested in reporting that out. Can you provide the documentation on that, including the date, amount and the name of the vendor?

“Please ask your source, who apparently has access to the database of EPA’s expenditures.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>; Biesecker, Michael <MBiesecker@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Julie and Michael -

Below are our on-the-record responses in bold that you can attribute to me.

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]

Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 11:47 AM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Bug sweeping, biometric locks

Liz, Jahan,

AP will be publishing a story about \$3,000 in taxpayer funds expended in April for a contractor to sweep Administrator Pruitt's office for electronic listening devices. We will also be reporting on spending to install biometric locks in his suite.

When coupled with the previously reported purchase of the privacy booth, it raises questions about why Pruitt feels the need to invest in counter-surveillance measures that none of his predecessors felt were necessary. EPA headquarters is a secure building with armed security and metal detectors at the entrances. Pruitt also has his personal security detail. Is the administrator concerned about the potential for electronic spying against him by the agency's own employees?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA's Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

As part of the same story, we will also be mentioning the \$120,000 Definers contract and the FOIAs filed by America Rising targeted at EPA employees viewed as potentially disloyal to the Trump administration. Please provide any comment you have on those issues.

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael



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To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
Cc: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 7/10/2017 3:26:59 PM
Subject: RE: Media Clips Service Contract

I would update this to 8:00 AM EDT and then an afternoon matrix that is sent out by 4:00 PM EDT.

Additionally, in terms of sending this to 600 people, we might want to work with Mr. Pounder on clarifying what can and cannot be done to prevent anything from going into a SPAM filter or being shutdown. My suggestion would be daily, real-time alerts to roughly 100 people and then a matrix that would go to top people in each regional office and their press teams who can further distribute the information.

The contractor shall deliver the daily compendium by 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time. This briefing will go to a listserv maintained by the contractor of approximately 600 people. This daily compendium will include media coverage from the preceding 24 hour period, except in the case of the daily compendium for Monday mornings, which will also capture media coverage from the weekend. Alerts on breaking news will be delivered throughout the day from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2017 10:02 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Media Clips Service Contract

Hi Jahan,

Circling back to see if you have any comments, before we move forward on this. Thanks, George

From: Hull, George
Sent: Friday, July 07, 2017 6:40 PM
To: Nancy Grantham (grantham.nancy@epa.gov) <grantham.nancy@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: Media Clips Service Contract

Nancy and Jahan,

Please find attached the draft “Statement of Work” for the Definers contract that we are developing. The Statement of Work is the section of the contract that lays out the details of what we expect the company to provide, parameters on delivery, timing, etc. I believe this language to be consistent with our conversations on the services we are seeking, but thought it was important that you review and have a chance to discuss or suggest changes. If you could get back to me on Monday morning, I can get any changes incorporated into the contract and continue forward. Thanks, George

To: Davenport, Coral[coral.davenport@nytimes.com]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 3/16/2018 4:12:45 PM
Subject: RE: Pruitt's national profile

Thanks for chatting off-the-record.

Here is our on-the-record statement: **“From interviews with The New York Times’ podcast, CBS Evening News, and National Review to local newspapers like the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Administrator Pruitt has utilized a wide array of news outlets to advance President Trump’s agenda on regulatory certainty and environmental stewardship.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Additionally below are some of the interviews that we have done in the past year.

Jahan

REGIONAL MEDIA

Reno KRVN-TV: Pruitt discusses his visit to Nevada. “Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency Scott Pruitt sat down with News 4’s Bill Frankmore on Monday morning to discuss his event with Governor Brian Sandoval at Anaconda Mine in Lyon County regarding future clean-up and his visit with miners at Coeur Rochester Mine in Lovelock.” (02/05/18)

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Pruitt outlined his course of action to cleanup West Lake. “In a long-awaited decision that appears to be a compromise, the Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday recommended partial excavation of the West Lake Landfill in Bridgeton to remove radioactive waste linked to the Manhattan Project.” (02/01/18)

St. Louis KMOX-TV: Just Moms STL was happy with Pruitt's decision regarding West Lake. "Dawn Chapman and Karen Nickel of the Just Moms STL advocacy group say at first, the group was worried a partial removal would mean only 5percent removed. With a 70percent or more removal — they are pleased. 'I can tell you that we are happy with this decision, and what this does for us is it gives us direction,' Nickel says. 'We’ve gone without a decision at the site for 10 years, and it’s time that we have direction.'"

(02/01/18)

Cedar Rapids Gazette: Pruitt wants to work hand in hand with states. "What's important for us in Washington, D.C., to do is to learn and partner and work with folks at the state level to achieve good outcomes together. That just simply has not happened for a number of years,' said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, during a stop in Nevada." (12/01/17)

Des Moines Register: Pruitt called farmers the first “conservationists, environmentalists.” "Pruitt said the country needed to discuss what 'true environmentalism' means: 'We have been blessed with a bounty of natural resources. And some view that as 'We should simply not use them' — that we should put up fences and not use our natural resources. 'I don't buy that. We, as a country, have an obligation to feed the world and power the world,' he said, getting applause. 'When you have the natural resources like we do, we should use them to benefit our neighbors, our country and world.'" (12/01/17)

Louisville WHAS-TV: Pruitt will have changes to Obama's WOTUS. "The head of the United States Environmental Protection Agency was in Louisville Thursday with a promise of change to one of the most controversial environmental regulations for Kentucky farmers. Administrator Scott Pruitt told the Kentucky Farm Bureau's 98th Annual Meeting that the "Waters of the United States" regulation will be changed forever by mid-2018." (12/01/17)

The Chicago Tribune: Pruitt orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup. "“We continue to make cleaning up East Chicago a priority, to protect the health and well-being of the residents who live in the impacted areas,' said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in a statement. The EPA estimated the companies will have to pay \$24 million for the remediation, according to the announcement, and \$2.25 million for the indoor dust cleaning.” (10/18/17)

The Clarion Ledger: Pruitt addressed energy issues in Mississippi. “U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt visited Mississippi Thursday to discuss proposed changes to the Waters of the United States rule, just days after announcing the repeal of the Clean Power Plan.” (10/13/17)

Houston Chronicle: After Harvey, Pruitt vows bold response to polluted sites around Houston. “Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, who has visited Texas twice since Hurricane Harvey, vowed Thursday to have ‘an answer’ by next month for a permanent solution to clean up the San Jacinto River Waste Pits.” (09/22/17)

Des Moines WHO-TV: EPA chief, a former baseball exec, wants ‘world, world series.’ “I think baseball is one of those sports we can actually truly have a world series, we can have a world competition. We've seen it in other instances and I think that's an opportunity that we need to be pursuing.” (08/14/17)

Des Moines WHO-TV: EPA Head Agrees That Des Moines Superfund Site Needs to Develop, But When? “Political Director Dave Price talked to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt about efforts to redevelop superfund sites, like Des Moines, all over the country.” (08/08/17)

Radio Iowa: Pruitt visits Iowa to discuss WOTUS. “Pruitt said his goal is to provide ‘regulatory clarity’ with a new rule, so property owners will know where federal jurisdiction begins and ends. ‘If you want to build a pond on your land,’ Pruitt said, ‘if you have natural springs on your land and you want to want to water your livestock and build (a retention) pond...and you’re not really sure whether if you do that you’re going to be subject to \$37,000-plus a day in fines if you don’t get a permit and you find it out five years from now, what does that mean? You don’t build the pond or you don’t build the subdivision or you don’t use your land the way you want.’” (08/08/17)

Denver KDVR-TV: Pruitt Gold King Mine on 2-Year Anniversary of Spill Caused by Agency. “Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt and Colorado leaders will tour the site of the Gold King mine spill on Friday to mark the second anniversary of the spill that dumped 3 million gallons of tainted wastewater into the Animas River.” (08/04/17)

Arkansas Democrat Gazette: Pruitt discusses WOTUS in Arkansas. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt visited with Arkansas Cabinet officials and agriculture representatives Thursday about changes they would like to see made to the nation's

definition of protected water bodies.” (07/21/17)

Minneapolis Star Tribune: Pruitt Signals Welcome Support for Great Lakes Restoration Project. “Environmental Protection Agency Secretary Scott Pruitt’s visit to Minnesota last week yielded an unexpected boon for those who care about clean water. In an interview with a Star Tribune reporter, Pruitt affirmed his support for federal funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which provides landmark protections for Lakes Huron, Erie, Michigan, Ontario and, most treasured by Minnesotans, Superior.” (07/21/17)

Minneapolis Star-Tribune: Pruitt is working hard to protect the Great Lakes. “Scott Pruitt, the nation’s top environmental officer, said Wednesday he endorses continued federal funding for a landmark cleanup of the Great Lakes... ‘It’s a continuing need, and we have to see that it’s adequately funded.’” (07/20/17)

Twin Cities WCCO-TV: Pruitt gave an in-depth interview about the EPA’s Back-To-Basics Agenda. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt was in studio for an exclusive interview while he was in the state to meet with Gov. Mark Dayton. He’s in Minnesota as part of his Back-To-Basics tour and talked about rolling back regulations.” (07/19/17)

Deseret News: Pruitt visited Utah and talked about WOTUS. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt visited Utah as part of multistate tour to get input on how the agency can be more responsive to states’ needs in general and in specific how the controversial Waters of the United States rule should be retooled.” (07/18/17)

Salt Lake City KTVX-TV: Pruitt discusses his Back-To-Basics agenda. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt made his first stop on the State Action Tour here in Utah. This morning he sat down with Glen Mills on Good Morning Utah exclusively to talk about the tour.” (07/18/17)

Tulsa World: EPA Chief Scott Pruitt says he’s ‘determined to prioritize Superfund cleanups.’ “‘It’s important that we address state and tribal rights when protecting the environment and natural resources,’ Pruitt said upon announcement of a new grant awarded the Quapaw Tribe.” (05/31/17)

Tulsa World: EPA's Pruitt: Agency is 'doing what it's supposed to do' at Osage pollution site. ““This is just leadership,” Pruitt said. “It’s our agency doing what it’s supposed to do, coming in, finding out what the source of the problem is, getting it corrected.” (05/28/17)

Minot Daily News: Governor Burgum says Pruitt is good for North Dakota. “Burgum said he feels Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, will have the biggest single impact on North Dakota. Pruitt, an attorney, is a Republican politician from Oklahoma. He has been a leading advocate against the EPA’s activist agenda, including suing the EPA to block its Clean Power Plan and Waters of the United States rule.” (05/01/17)

NATIONAL TV

CBS Evening News: Pruitt discussed the role of the EPA. “We should be about administering the statutes we’re required to administer, but we shouldn’t come in and say that the way forward in environmental protection is prohibition vs. stewardship. We can feed the world and we can power the world, and we should do that.” (01/18/18)

Reuters TV: Trump’s EPA aims to replace Obama-era climate, water regulations in 2018. “[Pruitt] said the agency was also planning to rewrite the Waters of the United States rule, another Obama-era regulation, this one defining which U.S. waterways are protected under federal law. Pruitt and Trump have said the rule marked an overreach by including streams that are shallow, narrow, or sometimes completely dry - and was choking off energy development.” (01/08/18)

MSNBC’s Morning Joe: Pruitt said the Paris agreement put our economy at a disadvantage. “When you look at what was agreed to in Paris, it put this country, our country, at a disadvantage economically.” (06/07/17)

NBC's Meet the Press: Scott Pruitt: American carbon reductions predate Paris Climate Deal. "Paris is a bad deal for this country." (06/05/17)

ABC's This Week: Pruitt discussed how small businesses across the country are celebrating President Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris agreement. "Well, when you look at, even *The New York Times* had an article, I think, within the last couple of days that talked about small business celebrating, euphoria with respect to the president's decision." (06/04/17)

Fox News Sunday: Pruitt explained how the U.S. is the energy technology leader of the world. "If China and India want to reduce their CO2 footprint, they should learn from us," Pruitt told Fox News' Chris Wallace." (06/04/17)

CNBC: EPA takes aim at CAFE standards. "We can be both pro-growth, pro-jobs and pro-environment, says Scott Pruitt, EPA administrator, discussing the agency's new agenda and plans to roll back regulations and tackle fuel standards." (03/09/17)

NATIONAL PRINT

TIME: Administrator Pruitt on Enforcement: "I don't spend any time with polluters. I prosecute polluters." (10/20/17)

Wall Street Journal: Pruitt said West Lake sends a results-driven message. "This sends a message that we're actually going to get results," Mr. Pruitt said. "Frankly it's just what we ought to be doing." (02/01/18)

Talking Points Memo: Pruitt Talks About New 'Sue and Settle' Policy. "Pruitt pledged that the agency would no longer reimburse attorneys' fees in cases where it decides to avoid a lawsuit, arguing that both environmental and business groups had abused it to enrich themselves in the past. 'This is not particular to one type of plaintiff,' he said. 'There should be no attorneys' fees paid, period, no matter who the plaintiff is.'" (10/16/17)

Washington Examiner: EPA's Scott Pruitt declares 'war on lead.' "EPA

Administrator Scott Pruitt has begun an effort to 'eradicate' lead poisoning from drinking water, more than three years after the crisis in Flint, Michigan, started. Pruitt hosted a meeting Jan. 8 for state and local officials at agency headquarters in Washington to obtain feedback on ways to update the 1991 Lead and Copper Rule ... It has not been revised in more than a decade." (01/23/18)

Wall Street Journal: Pruitt aims to accelerate his efforts to remake the EPA.

"Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt plans to use his second year on the job to accelerate efforts to remake the agency, saying he wants to speed its permitting processes and transform a culture he says is bureaucratic." (01/17/18)

E&E News: Pruitt Meets with Moms Clean Air Force. Dominique Browning ... co-founder and senior director of Moms Clean Air Force, along with other officials from her organization, met last week with Pruitt and three members of his staff at EPA's Washington, D.C., headquarters ... "Browning said her impression of Pruitt was that he is 'determined' as well as 'intense, aggressive and focused. And the other thing on my impression is [he is] really, really smart,' she added." (1/15/18)

The Hill: EPA staffing falls to Reagan-era levels. "EPA's staffing is now lower than it was in former President Reagan's final year in office. An EPA spokeswoman said Tuesday that, as of Jan. 3, the agency had 14,162 employees, down from about 15,000 at the beginning of last year. That's even lower than the 14,400 employees the agency had in fiscal year 1988, Reagan's final year." (01/09/18)

National Review: Scott Pruitt's Reformation. "*Stewardship*, Pruitt says, is making responsible use of our national blessings, including our natural resources: 'Feed the world and fuel the world,' he says, over and over. But the Left — and the EPA, which has long been dominated by it — is not interested in stewardship. It's interested in prohibition, in a lot of Thou shalt and a whole heck of a lot more Thou shalt not. 'You have two different approaches, two different worldviews, two very different sets of assumptions,' Pruitt says." (12/31/17)

The Washington Post: How Scott Pruitt turned the EPA into one of Trump's most powerful tools. "... aggressiveness on issues from coal waste to vehicle emissions has made Pruitt one of Trump's most high-profile and consequential Cabinet members. It also has made him one of the most controversial ... Yet, allies praise Pruitt for returning

more power to individual states while scaling back what they see as the previous administration's regulatory excesses.” (12/31/17)

The Weekly Standard: The Man They Love to Hate. “Pruitt lauded the president for his ‘unflinching commitment to put America first’ and followed with what has become the theme of his EPA tenure. The United States does ‘better than anyone in the world in striking the balance between growing our economy, growing jobs while also being a good steward of our environment,’ he said. Between 2000 and 2014, America reduced ‘its carbon emissions by 18-plus percent. And this was accomplished not through government mandate, but accomplished through innovation and technology of the American private sector.’” (12/15/17)

Bloomberg: Administrator Pruitt lands on the list of 50 people defining global business in 2017. (11/30/17)

USA Today: Scott Pruitt on a mission to change the climate of the EPA. “He’s on a mission to re-engineer the agency’s culture by returning power to states and away from the Washington bureaucrats and coastal elites he said have led it astray.” (11/26/17)

TIME: Inside Scott Pruitt’s Mission to Remake the EPA. “Pruitt has pioneered a radically different approach to environmental regulation, weighing impact on job growth and the concerns of business groups on a level plane with environmental protection when the law allows.” (10/26/17)

Bloomberg: EPA's Pruitt Vows to Get Tough on Polluters. “Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, vowed that he will get tough on corporate polluters, dismissing critics who cast him as too cozy with industry. ‘They don’t know me,’ Pruitt said, during an interview with Bloomberg News in his Washington office. ‘I’ve led a grand jury. We are going to do enforcement, to go after bad actors and go after polluters.’” (10/25/17)

The Daily Signal: Trump’s EPA Chief Charts a New Course. “My job is to enforce the laws as passed by whom? Congress. They give me my authority. That’s the jurisdictional responsibilities that I have, and when litigation is used to regulate...that’s

abusive. That's wrong." (10/20/17)

Fox News: EPA moves to repeal Obama's Clean Power Plan coal regulations.

"‘That rule really was about picking winners and losers,’ Pruitt said. ‘The past administration was unapologetic, they were using every bit of power, authority to use the EPA to pick winners and losers on how we pick electricity in this country. That is wrong.’" (10/09/17)

The New York Times: EPA Announces Repeal of Major Obama-era Carbon Emissions Rule. "Mr. Pruitt, who had signaled the move at an event with coal miners in eastern Kentucky on Monday, said in a news release that his predecessors had departed from regulatory norms in writing the Clean Power Plan, which was finalized in 2015 and would have pushed states to move away from coal in favor of sources of electricity that produce fewer carbon emissions." (10/09/17)

Politico Top 50: #9 Scott Pruitt. "Donald Trump's pledge to unravel Barack Obama's climate agenda may be—in the long run—the single most significant action he takes as president. And there's one man tasked with turning Trump's rhetoric into reality: Scott Pruitt." (09/01/17)

The Daily Caller: EPA's Scott Pruitt: What was so great about Obama's environmental record? "‘Everyone looks at the Obama administration as being the environmental savior. Really? He was the environmental savior...Well, he left us with more Superfund sites than when he came in. He had Gold King [the 2015 mine wastewater spill] and Flint, Michigan [drinking water crisis]. He tried to regulate CO2 twice and flunked twice. Struck out. So what's so great about that record? I don't know.’" (09/13/17)

Washington Examiner: Pruitt advances Back-to-Basics agenda. "Few Trump administration agency chiefs have moved as decisively to implement an agenda as Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and he's quite clear about what he wants to do. He calls it a 'back to the basics' agenda, removing the government from what he considers extraneous activity." (09/13/17)

The Washington Free Beacon: EPA workforce approaching lowest levels since Reagan. "We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," Pruitt said. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars, and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs." (09/06/17)

The Washington Examiner: Scott Pruitt criticizes Obama as 'environmental savior,' moves EPA away from climate change. "Few Trump administration agency chiefs have moved as decisively to implement an agenda as Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and he's quite clear about what he wants to do. He calls it a 'back to the basics' agenda, removing the government from what he considers extraneous activity — namely, the climate change battle taken up by former President Barack Obama, who he questioned as an "environmental savior." (09/13/17)

Reuters: Pruitt gave a wide-ranging interview about protecting the environment and American jobs. "The past administration was all about words. This administration is all about action. Look at the actions this country has taken. We have reduced our greenhouse gas levels to pre-1994 levels primarily through technology and innovation, not through government mandate. We have nothing to be apologetic about with the rest of the world." (07/11/17)

Wall Street Journal: EPA to Unveil New Chemical Testing Rules. "The Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday will release new rules to clarify the agency's process of testing the chemicals used in everyday products and other commerce, a matter of deep importance to manufacturers, consumers and environmental advocates." (06/22/17)

The Daily Caller: Trump Delays One of the Most Expensive EPA Regulations Ever. "The Trump administration announced Tuesday evening it would delay the implementation of a smog rule that's been called one of the costliest clean air regulations ever." (06/07/17)

The Washington Post: EPA head Scott Pruitt defends Paris exit. "When we joined Paris, the rest of the world applauded ... because it put this country at disadvantage... It's a bad deal for this country. We're going to make sure as we make deals we're going

to put the interests of America first.” (06/04/17)

The Washington Post: Scott Pruitt, outspoken and forceful, moves to the center of power within the Trump administration. “Less than four months ago, Scott Pruitt arrived in Washington with few connections to President Trump’s inner circle and took the helm of an agency where many employees were openly hostile to him. But the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency has emerged as one of the most influential policy architects in the president’s Cabinet, a skilled and sometimes brash lawyer who is methodically taking apart a slew of regulations and agreements affecting a range of issues, from manufacturing operations to landfills.” (06/02/17)

Need to Know Network: Pruitt promises to put states back in the driver’s seat on regulations. “Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will.” (05/11/17)

The Hill: EPA seeks governors’ input in rewriting Obama water rule. “‘EPA is restoring states’ important role in the regulation of water,’ Pruitt said in a statement. ‘Like President Trump, I believe that we need to work with our state governments to understand what they think is the best way to protect their waters, and what actions they are already taking to do so. We want to return to a regulatory partnership, rather than regulate by executive fiat.’” (05/09/17)

The Washington Examiner: EPA Head Pruitt: We hear East Chicago’s concerns ‘loud and clear.’ “Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt visited East Chicago on Wednesday to assure residents, state and local leaders that Washington is meeting its commitments to protect citizens from lead contamination. ‘Their concerns were heard loud and clear, and I am committed to ensuring that the EPA works with our federal, state and local partners to find solutions that protect the health and safety of East Chicago,’ Pruitt said.” (04/19/17)

The Wall Street Journal: Scott Pruitt’s Back-to-Basics Agenda for the EPA. “You might call him an EPA originalist... When Mr. Pruitt sat down Thursday for his first interview since his November nomination, he spent most of the time waxing enthusiastic about all the good his agency can accomplish once he refocuses it on its statutorily defined mission: working cooperatively with the states to improve water and air quality.”

(02/17/17)

NATIONAL RADIO & PODCAST

The New York Times' 'The Daily:' **Pruitt discusses how he's focused on protecting the environment and human health.** "The role of a regulator is to make things regular. To take a statue, to use its authority, to fairly enforce it." (02/02/18)

The Hugh Hewitt Show: **EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on 'so called' Clean Power Plan.** "For the first time ever, the EPA took its authority and said we can dictate, really coerce states and utility companies across the country and tell them how to generate electricity. You know, when you look at how we generate electricity in this country, we obviously use multiple energy sources." (10/11/17)

ABC News "Powerhouse Politics Podcast:" **Scott Pruitt talks about Hurricane Irma recovery efforts.** "There's many issues, from drinking water to Superfund to debris management and landfills, that we're dealing with in this kind of situation." (09/08/17)

Fox News' Brian Kilmeade Show: **EPA Chairman Scott Pruitt on potential ramifications of pulling out of the Paris Climate Agreement.** "We are leading the world now, we are at pre-1994 levels with our CO-2 footprint, not because of Paris, not because of a government mandate but because of innovation and technology. For those who say we are going to lose our seat at the table, we are the United States, we don't lose our seat at the table." (05/19/17)

EDITORIALS

The Wall Street Journal: **Pruitt's ends sue and settle practices also known as 'extortion by environmental lawsuit.'** "Scott Pruitt continues to press reform at the Environmental Protection Agency, this week issuing a directive to curb the collusive Washington game of "sue and settle" lawsuits. This is a victory for democratic consent over legal extortion." (10/18/17)

The Wall Street Journal: Pruitt's clean power break. "The Trump Administration is giving the economy a boost with its deregulatory agenda, and the latest example comes Tuesday when Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt will propose to repeal the Obama Administration's Clean Power Plan. Ending this power grab will uphold the letter of the law and restore cooperative federalism with the states." (10/08/17)

Washington Examiner: Praise for Pruitt's commitment to the Agency's core mission. "We applaud Pruitt's mission of restoring the EPA to its proper shape and size. And we hope he has the humility, the diligence, and the skill to pull it off, for the sake of the Constitution, the economy, and the environment." (09/18/17)

Denver Post: Pruitt Right to Pursue Funds for Gold King Mine Victims. "Scott Pruitt, head of the Environmental Protection Agency, is doing the right thing in his efforts to make whole the victims of the Gold King Mine spill that spewed 3 million of gallons of toxic water into the Animas River and downstream to New Mexico." (08/18/17)

Tulsa World: Pruitt gets out of Washington and 'talks to ordinary Americans.' "We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans. If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists." (07/30/17)

The Oklahoman: Pruitt meets with stakeholders, including energy industry. "...the fact Pruitt regularly corresponded and dealt with energy industry officials as attorney general of a state where energy is the No. 1 industry should not be surprising nor should it, by itself, be considered nefarious." (06/21/17)

The Wall Street Journal: Cleaning up the Superfund mess. "One cost of making climate change a religion is that more immediate environmental problems have been ignored—not least by the Environmental Protection Agency. New EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt plans to address that in an underreported effort to clean up toxic waste sites under the so-called Superfund program." (06/12/17)

The Wall Street Journal: **Highway from the endangerment zone.** “Mr. Pruitt is a natural target for the left, but when conservatives are impugning one of the leaders of President Trump’s economic deregulation project as a sellout, maybe the problem is the critics, not Mr. Pruitt.” (04/18/17)

Tulsa World: **Congratulations, Scott Pruitt.** “Pruitt is a serious, intelligent man who has worked hard for the people of Oklahoma. Like most Oklahomans, he is a genuine conservative. He has taken seriously his promises to voters that he would resist federal intrusions on state authority and personal freedom, and anyone who is surprised by that must not have been paying attention.” (02/21/17)

ADMINISTRATOR PRUITT’S OP-EDs

USA Today: **Clean air, land and water: Time for the EPA to start keeping its promises.** “A few months ago, I promised the people of Missouri that I would make a decision and propose a cleanup plan for the West Lake Landfill. Recently, I made good on that commitment. On Feb. 1, the Environmental Protection Agency put forth its plan to clean up the West Lake Landfill ... In less than a year, this administration will solve a problem that previous administrations could not fix in the years since 1990, when the site was added to the Superfund priorities list.” (02/14/18)

The Washington Times: **Paving the path to U.S. energy dominance.** “An energy-dominant America will export to markets around the world, increasing our global leadership and influence. Becoming energy dominant means that we are getting government out of the way so that we can share our energy wealth with developing nations. For years, Washington stood in the way of our energy dominance. That changes now.” (06/26/17)

The Washington Times: **EPA is putting American workers first.** “Americans who want a healthy and clean environment expect lawful, effective and economically sound regulation — the Clean Power Plan failed on all three counts. EPA can and should now focus on getting real results in the fight for clean air, land and water.” (05/01/17)

USA Today: **We’re protecting jobs and the environment.** “There’s a phrase I’ve used often over the past several weeks — ‘The future ain’t what it used to be.’ After my first full month serving as administrator to the Environmental Protection Agency, there’s no question times are changing...” (03/20/17)

From: Davenport, Coral [mailto:coral.davenport@nytimes.com]
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2018 10:25 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Pruitt's national profile

Happy Friday!

I'm working on a story looking at how the administrator is being talked about for a number of positions beyond his current one. AG, Sen or Gov of OK, possibly even a run at POTUS in 2024. Part of this is that he has a much higher national profile than most of his political predecessors. He's on the cover of Nat Review and Weekly Standard, headlining CPAC, lots of appearances in conservative media -- this kind of high profile and name recognition is unusual for an EPA administrator. As is the idea that anyone would or could jump from this spot to a more high-profile one, and be talked about as running for national office.

Would love to talk with him about this - but, barring that, Jahan, given your own background in this space would love to chat with you about how Pruitt has gained this national profile that is unusual for someone in this office.

Moment to chat in the next couple hours?

Cheers,

cd

--

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Cc: Freire, JP[Freire.JP@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[jahanwilcoxepa@gmail.com]
From: Konkus, John
Sent: Sun 3/26/2017 2:08:26 PM
Subject: Re:

This is from the RNC's tv eyes?

On Mar 26, 2017, at 10:06 AM, EPA Jahan Wilcox <jahanwilcoxepa@gmail.com> wrote:

This Week (ABC) – EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt Interview

<http://mms.tveyes.com/transcript.asp?PlayClip=FALSE&DTSearch=TRUE&DateTime=03%2F26%2>

SCOTT PRUITT: george, good morning.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: is the ek tech pif order coming this week? what will the president be proposing?

PRUITT: george, the president is keeping his promise to the american people. this week. with respect to the executive order coming down on tuesday. the energy independence executive order. we need a pro-growth and pro-environment approach. for too long, we have accepted a narrative that if you're pro-growth, pro-jobs, you're anti-environment. that's not where we have been as a country. we have made tremendous choices on our environment. the executive order will address the past administration's efforts to kill jobs throughout the country.

STEPHANOPOULOS: this order is likely to face legal challenges. coal jobs have been declining for a long time. we heard the president's promise. most of the job loss predates the obama initiative. the biggest drops came over a decade ago. you have about the same number of coal jobs now as you had a decade ago. are you worried that the president is making a promise that he just can't keep?

PRUITT: it's not just the short term, george. it's the long term. the past administration had a very anti-fossil fuel strategy. he's saying we can put people back to work and be pro-environment as well. his clean power plant is likely unlawful. there's been a stay against it. our action starting on tuesday, shortly after the executive order will make sure whatever steps we take in the future will be pro-growth, pro-environment. within the framework of the clean air act. it will be legal.

STEPHANOPOULOS: but will it bring back coal jobs?

PRUITT: i think absolutely it will. it will bring back manufacturing jobs, coal jobs across the country. across the energy sector, we have so much opportunity. the last administration wanted to keep it in the ground. we need to move more independent. this is an opportunity. this past week, the president approved the keystone pipeline. it's transportation issues. the jobs are across the economy.

STEPHANOPOULOS: if the president follows through on this and then reverses vehicle pollution rules, there is no way to stay with the french agreement. the message they, the trump administration is sending to the rest of the world is that they don't believe climate change is serious. it's shocking to see such a degree of ignorance from the united states. your response?

PRUITT: george, we're actually at pre-1994 levels right now with respect to our co₂ footprint. why is that? largely because of innovation and technology in the coal sector and the natural gas sector. horizontal drilling, much more conversion to natural gas to electricity. not just jobs will be created. it's lower electricity rates for consumers. when you take coal generation facilities, natural gas facilities and put them aside, it's causing double-digit increases across the country. it's not good on the consumer and manufacturing side.

STEPHANOPOULOS: i was asking about the paris climate agreement. don't these initiatives mean the agreement is a dead letter.

PRUITT: the paris accord is nonbinding. it was not a treaty, as such. the clean power plan is not tethered to the paris accords. this is an effort to undo the unlawful approach the previous administration engaged in and do it right going forward. with the mind set of being pro-growth and pro environment.

STEPHANOPOULOS: can we achieve the agreement of the paris climate agreement?

PRUITT: since 1980, a 65% reduction of -- we have done great work as a country striking the balance between jobs and our environment. the past administration took steps that were anti-jobs and rowth.

STEPHANOPOULOS: the california acted this week to tighten pollution standards. going in the opposite direction from what president trump is proposing. a headline from yesterday's "new york times." do you plan to let that stand?

PRUITT: what we should be doing. you mentioned the cafe standards. the last week and half, the president and i were in detroit announcing we were going to keep our word as a country to re-evaluate those in april 2018. we ought to focus on fuel efficiency for cars people want to buy. this process of building cars that no one purchases in order to meet these standards that were previously set is counterhelp counterhelpful. people don't buy the new cars. they keep older cars. we'll be evaluating that through spril of 2018. the cafe standard and the clean power plant and the executive order sends a message to the american people that we're going to do what we can to produce jobs and growth and be sensitive to the environment and reintroduce common sense into the discussion. you mentioned the pair accord. what was wrong with paris was not just that it was failed to be treated as a treaty. but china and india got away scot-free. they didn't have to take steps until 2030. we penalized ourselves through lost jobs while china and india didn't take steps to address the issue internationally. paris was just a bad deal, in my estimation. but, we're trying to focus on getting thing right here domestically. operating within the frame work of the clean air act.

STEPHANOPOULOS: thank you for your time this trump

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 9/28/2017 10:54:32 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Morgan Stanley: BUZZ IN THE CAPITOL: Smaller tax package in 2017 possible -- SCOTT PRUITT flying private -- Senate GOP: No clue who Roy Moore is -- BANNON on Bloomberg Businessweek cover -- BREAKING: Hugh Hefner dead at 91

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Morgan Stanley

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Thursday morning. BUZZ IN THE CAPITOL -- SMALL TAX PACKAGE THIS YEAR? -- If Congress can't squeeze through a big tax reform package this year, there's already talk among some about passing a smaller package of tax cuts before the end of 2017, with the promise of trying to complete a larger reform effort in 2018. This would be a way for Republicans to say they gave the tax relief they promised. With health care reform far off, tax is the ball game for Republicans as they head into the 2018 election. There is optimism -- some would call it exuberance -- that Republicans will be able to get a large-scale tax package through in the 36 legislative days before the year's up.
FOR YOUR SITUATIONAL AWARENESS -- Washington has a government funding fight in roughly two months.

FOR YOUR RADAR -- NOT GOOD FOR HILL REPUBLICANS -- From the most recent Quinnipiac poll: "American voters disapprove 78 - 15 percent of the job Republicans in Congress are doing, worse than their 70 - 25 percent disapproval in a June 29 Quinnipiac University poll. Even Republican voters disapprove 61 - 32 percent. Voters disapprove 63 - 29 percent of the job Democrats in Congress are doing, virtually unchanged from June.

"Voters say 47 - 38 percent, including 44 - 32 percent among independent voters, that they would like to see Democrats win control of the U.S. House of Representatives in the 2018 Congressional elections. Voters also say 49 - 40 percent, including 47 - 34 percent among independent voters, they would like to see Democrats win control of the U.S. Senate next year." <http://bit.ly/2fTsHO4>

ET TU, SCOTT PRUITT? -- WAPO'S BRADY DENNIS and JULIET EILPERIN: "EPA's Pruitt took charter, military flights that cost taxpayers more than \$58,000": "The

most expensive of the four trips came in early June, when Pruitt traveled from Andrews Air Force Base to Cincinnati to join President Trump as he pitched a plan to revamp U.S. infrastructure. From there, the administrator and several staff members continued on a military jet to John F. Kennedy airport in New York to catch a flight to Italy for an international meeting of environmental ministers. The cost of that flight was \$36,068.50." <http://wapo.st/2wVQkj8>

-- **AN EPA OFFICIAL** emailed us the authorization memos from the EPA's general counsel's office for the flights Pruitt took: <http://politi.co/2fBCgUV> ... <http://politi.co/2k3xZuG> ... <http://politi.co/2hyaNnD>

-- **FROM MORNING ENERGY:** "Any other non-commercial flights? 'This is it,' a spokesman told ME on Wednesday, adding he believed Pruitt had only flown by helicopter once to survey hurricane damage."

-- **NOT FLYING PRIVATE: ELAINE CHAO.** She was spotted flying coach yesterday on American Airlines flight 1597 from Phoenix to BWI. She was attending a conference for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

-- **THE FRONT PAGE OF THE NYT** has a tease of their story about Trump's anger toward Tom Price. <http://nyti.ms/2fAsQJ1>

BULLETIN - AP at 6:12 a.m.: "BEIJING (AP) - Reports: China orders most North Korean-owned businesses, ventures with Chinese partners closed under U.N. sanctions."

STORY OF THE DAY -- CAPITOL HILL BUREAU CHIEF JOHN BRESNAHAN --
"Senate Republicans have never heard of Roy Moore: Numerous GOP senators said they were not familiar with the Alabama Senate candidate's controversial views - but they want him elected": "What about Moore's history of racially insensitive comments? Haven't heard anything. Homophobic remarks? Nada. Moore's claim that some American communities are living under Sharia law? Crickets. Moore's statement that 9/11 happened 'because we've distanced ourselves from God'? Nothing for you on that. Moore's assertion that Democratic Rep. Keith Ellison shouldn't be allowed to serve in Congress because he's a Muslim? We'll get back to you. Moore saying Mitch McConnell should be replaced as Senate majority leader? Uhh, zip.

"'I don't know anything about Roy Moore,' said Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa). 'If I've read anything he's said, I wouldn't have any recollection of it.' 'I don't know him. I think I'll leave it there,' said Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, who laughed when asked about Moore. 'I supported Luther Strange.' 'I've never met the gentleman,' said Georgia Sen. Johnny Isakson. 'Being from Georgia, which is next to Alabama, I've heard his name in the Alabama Supreme Court. I know what I've seen on TV and what I've read in the papers.' ...

"'Who won? I wasn't paying attention,' [Nevada Sen. Dean] Heller said. 'I'm just

worried about taxes.' 'He's going to be for tax reform, I think,' volunteered Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio. 'I don't know, I don't know him.' South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, the lone African-American Republican in the Senate, said he 'didn't know anything about Roy Moore, and I'm not going to comment about anything I haven't read about. ... I literally have not followed that race.' ... 'Roy Moore is unique,' Shelby said cautiously. 'A lot of people have history up here.'" <http://politi.co/2yJVbBk>

ELIANA JOHNSON: "Moore's win conjures 2018 nightmare - for both parties":

"Roy Moore's win in Alabama's Senate primary has raised the specter of a nightmare scenario for Democrats and Republicans: The GOP picks up a handful of seats next year, padding its Senate majority, but with candidates like Moore, who buck party leadership as often as they fall in line. ... 'All of us who saw the rise of Trump and thought, 'Oh, this country could never elect somebody who brags about assaulting women and mocks the disabled and war veterans, we're thinking differently now,' said Paul Begala, the veteran Democratic strategists. ... 'What do they say in recoveries? You have to hit bottom? I thought that with Trump they hit bottom,' Begala said of the GOP. 'But, apparently not, because Moore is worse.'" <http://politi.co/2y9LYpf>

-- "Roy Moore's Alabama Victory Sets Off Talk of a G.O.P. Insurrection," by NYT's Alex Burns and Jonathan Martin: "Republicans are confronting an insurrection on the right that is angry enough to imperil their grip on Congress, and senior party strategists have concluded that the conservative base now loathes its leaders in Washington the same way it detested President Barack Obama. ... Mr. Strange's demise, senior party strategists and conservative activists said Wednesday, makes it likelier that Republican incumbents in the House and Senate will face serious primary challenges in 2018, fueled by anger at the party's apparent ineptitude at wielding power in Washington. ...

"Republicans increasingly worry that their base's contempt for Mr. McConnell is more potent than its love for Mr. Trump. Mr. McConnell could be an anchor around incumbents in the same fashion as Representative Nancy Pelosi, the House Democratic leader, who is routinely used to undermine Democratic candidates." <http://nyti.ms/2xCT7ep>

RICH LOWRY, "The GOP Identity Crisis": "The Republican Party can't pass Obamacare repeal but it can nominate Roy Moore. This is the state of the GOP in a nutshell. It is a party locked in mortal combat between an establishment that is ineffectual and unimaginative and a populist wing that is ineffectual and inflamed. It is rare for a governing coalition to have a bitter factional fight-usually the party out of power deploys the circular firing squads-although, on the other hand, this particular coalition isn't doing much governing." <http://politi.co/2xEAIDC>

JOSH DAWSEY: "Bannon's next move: 'Repeat Alabama'": "Steve Bannon was amped early Wednesday, sounding as though he'd guzzled 20 Red Bulls at a victory party for Alabama's Roy Moore as he plotted his next slash-and-burn campaign with trademark pugilism. He left Alabama after orchestrating a call between Trump and Moore for a flight to Colorado to meet with potential 2018 Senate candidates gathered

there - and is planning extensive travel in coming months to recruit candidates to challenge incumbents across the country, people close to him say.

"Bannon says he remains on Trump's team, but others in the White House have their doubts about the former chief strategist's allegiance. He has told friends he is over the slights in the White House, but some close to him say he still seethes about a number of top officials, including Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and economic adviser Gary Cohn, whom Bannon routinely savaged as 'Globalist Gary.' He is publicly supportive of Trump but can be sharply critical in private, associates say." <http://politi.co/2yuJ3Dy>

-- **COVER DU JOUR - STEVE BANNON** on the cover of Bloomberg Businessweek, **"Where To Next?"** by Josh Green (online headline: "Bannon's Back and Targeting China"): "Bannon, who's been consulting with Henry Kissinger and other foreign policy veterans, is preparing a project to sound an alarm about what he views as the primary economic threat to America: China. ... As a candidate, Trump pledged to take aggressive action against China. And though he's continued to talk tough, he's done little to make good on his threats. ... That lack of progress has convinced Bannon that an outside entity is necessary to focus U.S. attention-and political pressure-on confronting China more aggressively. What made up his mind, he says, was a pair of September meetings at Kissinger's country home in Connecticut. ...

"The day after [Roy] Moore's victory, Bannon flew to Colorado to interview candidates in western states to carry the populist mantle in 2018. His effort to steer the GOP toward nationalism, Bannon explains, will involve encouraging candidates to take hard-line positions toward China. 'Every day we are going to be making China a huge part of the '18 and '20 elections,' Bannon says." <https://buswk.co/Bannonisback> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2wYP6Pv>

-- **BANNON** is headlining tonight at a conference put on by the Council for National Policy in Colorado Springs. He'll be talking about how conservatives win in 2018, according to someone familiar with the planning of the conference, which will also hear from David Clarke and Scott Walker.

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Refurbishing and recycling are extending product life cycles. Is this the next big disruptive trend? [Read more from Morgan Stanley.](#) *****

THE LATEST ON PUERTO RICO ... -- "Now even money is running out in storm-hit Puerto Rico," by AP's Ben Fox and Danica Coto in San Juan, Puerto Rico: "First, Hurricane Maria knocked out power and water to Puerto Rico. Then diesel fuel, gas and water became scarce. Now, it's money. The aftermath of the powerful storm has resulted in a near-total shutdown of the U.S. territory's economy that could last for weeks and has many people running seriously low on cash and worrying that it will become even harder to survive on this storm-ravaged island." <http://bit.ly/2wYaXXw>

INSIDE THE WEST WING -- "Kelly folds Navarro's trade shop into National

Economic Council," by Andrew Restuccia, Nahal Toosi and Tara Palmeri: "White House chief of staff John Kelly is folding adviser Peter Navarro's trade office into the National Economic Council - a move that could limit Navarro's influence in the West Wing. The Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, which is run by Navarro, will now be housed within the NEC, four administration officials told POLITICO. That means Navarro will report to NEC Director Gary Cohn, with whom he has repeatedly clashed in recent months. ... 'I'm a chain of command guy and will follow Chief Kelly's orders,' Navarro said in a statement to POLITICO. ...

"Kelly's decision to have Navarro report to Cohn, who has pushed behind the scenes to temper Trump's hardline instincts, could further isolate the former economics professor. Cohn is Navarro's 'nemesis,' according to an associate of Navarro's. The two men have sometimes yelled at each other during White House trade meetings, and Cohn has often been dismissive of Navarro's policy proposals. ... Supporters of Navarro's agenda worry the reassignment is the latest signal that the president is abandoning his trade promises." <http://politi.co/2k8li0P>

TAX REFORM KICKOFF -- WSJ'S RICH RUBIN -- "5 Takeaways From the GOP Tax Framework: What we know so far about the effect on households' tax burdens, budget deficits, business, and more": **"1. Don't try too hard to calculate your tax bill.** The framework offers plenty of specifics on tax rates and some deductions, but nowhere near enough for most people to figure out what they would pay. ... **2. The wealthy win, but stay tuned.** Key features of the tax plan skew the benefits toward upper-income households. ... Republicans left themselves an opening for a tax bracket above 35% that would apply to the very highest earners, and that could leave some in the top 1% worse off, especially in a high-tax state such as New York where the state and local tax deduction is valuable. **3. There will be bigger budget deficits.** ...

"4. It's the beginning, not the end. Congress still has a long checklist ahead. First, the House and Senate have to adopt a budget resolution. That will specify the maximum size of the tax cut over the next decade. It will also unlock the fast-track procedures known as reconciliation. Under reconciliation, a subsequent tax bill can pass with a simple majority and not require votes from Democrats.

"After the budget's done, the House and Senate will each write their own tax bills and advance them through committee. Expect the plans to diverge as legislators try to get the math to work and to wrangle the votes. The House will be tricky because GOP members from New York, New Jersey and California will resist the repeal of the state and local tax deduction. In the Senate, Republicans have just a two-vote margin, meaning each senator will have significant sway. **5. Business fights lie ahead."** <http://on.wsj.com/2wn01TA>

-- "Trump Tax Plan Benefits Wealthy, Including Trump," by NYT's Binyamin Appelbaum: "The tax plan that the Trump administration outlined on Wednesday is a potentially huge windfall for the wealthiest Americans. It would not directly benefit the bottom third of the population. As for the middle class, the benefits appear to be modest.

The administration and its congressional allies are proposing to sharply reduce taxation of business income, primarily benefiting the small share of the population that owns the vast majority of corporate equity.

"President Trump said on Wednesday that the cuts would increase investment and spur growth, creating broader prosperity. But experts say the upside is limited, not least because the economy is already expanding. The plan would also benefit Mr. Trump and other affluent Americans by eliminating the estate tax, which affects just a few thousand uber-wealthy families each year, and the alternative minimum tax, a safety net designed to prevent tax avoidance." <http://nyti.ms/2xylyeZ>

-- AP'S JOSH BOAK: "\$5 trillion question for Trump tax plan: How to pay for it?": "How do you pay for an estimated \$5.8 trillion tax cut? For President Donald Trump and Republican congressional leaders, that is the mostly unanswered \$5,800,000,000,000 question.

"The plan they released Wednesday took a first step toward outlining how Republicans propose to cover some of the monumental cost over the next 10 years, mainly by removing certain tax breaks. But even those proposed changes were left vague - and wouldn't remotely pay the full cost of the tax cut.

"The administration says it would eliminate most personal tax breaks. Possibly gone would be people's ability to deduct state and local taxes as well as eligible medical expenses. But doing so would still leave the tax cut more than \$2 trillion shy of paying for itself. The Trump administration argues that it can accelerate the economy's growth far beyond its current pace and, in doing so, generate enough federal revenue to cover the shortfall. Most economists have called that wishful thinking." <http://bit.ly/2yKgSI8>

REAL TALK ABOUT TRUMP'S WASHINGTON -- AP's JULIE PACE: "The dysfunctional dynamic now stands at the center of Republicans' last chance this year to prove they can pass major legislation -- a sweeping, multitrillion-dollar tax cut that GOP officials believe is crucial to the party maintaining its congressional majority in the midterms. 'Literally, if they can't do this, they can't do anything,' said Tim Pawlenty, the former Republican governor of Minnesota and head of the Financial Services Roundtable, a bank lobbying group." <http://bit.ly/2yITyUP>

-- "Ryan vents over stalled GOP agenda in Senate," by Cristiano Lima: "Speaker Paul Ryan on Wednesday said it was 'extremely frustrating' that the Republican majority in the Senate had been unable to push through pieces of the GOP agenda that have passed in the House. Equipped with graphs highlighting the disparity between the number of bills passed by the House and the number that have stalled in the Senate, Ryan (R-Wis.) aired his grievances during an interview on Fox News. He cited the upper chamber's inability to convert on the Republican Party's major goals thus far during the Trump administration.

"Is that frustrating for the House? You bet it's frustrating in the House,' Ryan told Fox

News' Sean Hannity, saying that 274 of the 337 bills that have passed in the House as of Sept. 22 have not made it through the Senate. Ryan singled out the Senate's inability to pass a bill for repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act as a particular point of disappointment for House Republicans, while highlighting their successes on legislation for financial regulations and immigration. 'The point is we're on schedule in the House,' he said. 'We passed the health care bill back in May. We passed the repeal of Dodd-Frank. We did Kate's law. We did sanctuary cities.'" <http://politi.co/2wXNrcW>

TRUMP'S DAY -- President Donald Trump will meet with Acting Homeland Security Secretary Elaine Duke. He will participate in the 70th anniversary celebration of the National Security Council and meet with Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong.

REMEMBERING HUGH HEFNER - Laura Mansnerus in the NYT: "Hugh Hefner, who created Playboy magazine and spun it into a media and entertainment-industry giant - all the while, as its very public avatar, squiring attractive young women (and sometimes marrying them) well into his 80s -- died on Wednesday at his home, the Playboy Mansion near Beverly Hills, Calif. He was 91. His death was announced by Playboy Enterprises.

"Hefner the man and Playboy the brand were inseparable. Both advertised themselves as emblems of the sexual revolution, an escape from American priggishness and wider social intolerance. Both were derided over the years -- as vulgar, as adolescent, as exploitative, and finally as anachronistic. But Mr. Hefner was a stunning success from his emergence in the early 1950s. His timing was perfect." <http://nyti.ms/2hyPv9w>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump leaves the Oval Office and walks to board Marine One on the South Lawn of the White House on Sept. 27. | Evan Vucci/AP Photo

NYT'S MAGGIE HABERMAN: "Trump's Inaugural Committee to Donate \$3 Million to Hurricane Relief": <http://nyti.ms/2hzEB36>

RUSSIA STILL AT IT -- "Twitter, With Accounts Linked to Russia, to Face Congress Over Role in Election," by NYT's Daisuke Wakabayashi and Scott Shane: "After a weekend when Americans took to social media to debate President Trump's admonishment of N.F.L. players who do not stand for the national anthem, a network of Twitter accounts suspected of links to Russia seized on both sides of the issue with hashtags such as #boycott nfl, #standforouranthem and #takeaknee. ... Since last month, researchers at the Alliance for Securing Democracy, a bipartisan initiative of the German Marshall Fund, a public policy research group in Washington, have been

publicly tracking 600 Twitter accounts - human users and suspected bots alike - they have linked to Russian influence operations. ...

"Of 80 news stories promoted last week by those accounts, more than 25 percent 'had a primary theme of anti-Americanism,' the researchers found. About 15 percent were critical of Hillary Clinton, falsely accusing her of funding left-wing antifa - short for anti-fascist - protesters, tying her to the lethal terrorist attack in Benghazi, Libya, in 2012 and discussing her daughter Chelsea's use of Twitter. Eleven percent focused on wiretapping in the federal investigation into Paul Manafort, President Trump's former campaign chairman, with most of them treated the news as a vindication for President Trump's earlier wiretapping claims." <http://nyti.ms/2wYC98o>

--"Russian-bought Black Lives Matter ad on Facebook targeted Baltimore and Ferguson," by CNN's Dylan Byers: "At least one of the Facebook ads bought by Russians during the 2016 presidential campaign referenced Black Lives Matter and was specifically targeted to reach audiences in Ferguson, Missouri and Baltimore, sources with knowledge of the ads told CNN. ... Senator Mark Warner, the top-ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said Tuesday that the 'million-dollar question' about the Facebook ads centered on how the Russians knew whom to target. ...

"The targeting issue is also important because, if it appears that the targeting was particularly sophisticated, questions may be raised about how the Russians knew where to direct their ads. Further, information about the targeting could help investigators determine whether or not there was collusion between these ad buyers and the Trump campaign." <http://cnnmon.ie/2k5sYSu>

HMM - "Chad's Inclusion in Travel Ban Could Jeopardize American Interests, Officials Say," by NYT's Helene Cooper, Mike Shear and Dionne Searcey: "President Trump's decision to impose his updated travel ban on Chad came over the objections of Pentagon and State Department officials, who argued that alienating the nation, one of America's more reliable counterterrorism allies in Africa, risked harming long-term national security interests, administration officials said on Tuesday. Mr. Trump accepted the recommendation of Elaine C. Duke, his acting secretary of Homeland Security, to include Chad in the travel ban after she wrote in a classified report that the country had done too little to crack down on Islamic extremists.

"The president announced the travel restrictions after the White House's Domestic Policy Council distributed Ms. Duke's report to relevant agencies to seek input, according to officials at the State Department and the Pentagon. Officials at both departments were opposed to banning travelers from Chad, concerned about American interests, as were diplomats at the American embassy in the capital of N'Djamena, administration officials said. But Stephen Miller, the president's senior policy adviser, urged adoption of the entire list as recommended by Ms. Duke." <http://nyti.ms/2hAQYfz>

-- "Alleged leaker Reality Winner said she stuffed NSA report in her pantyhose," by Josh Gerstein: "A National Security Agency contractor accused of leaking a classified

report on Russian hacking aimed at the 2016 election told FBI agents she smuggled the document out of a high-security intelligence facility in her pantyhose. That and other details appear in a transcript federal prosecutors filed in court Wednesday detailing the interrogation of 25-year-old linguist Reality Winner by the FBI as they carried out a search warrant at her home in June.

"After insisting for some time that she printed out the report and kept it on her desk for a few days before disposing of it in a burn bag, Winner caved and acknowledged she hid the document before sending it off to a news outlet, now known to be the Intercept. 'So how did you get it out of the office?' FBI agent Justin Garrick asked. 'Folded it in half in my pantyhose,' Winner replied." <http://politi.co/2k4ZrlF>

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley** : For decades, households and companies have been recycling for the good of the environment. Now there's an added incentive: it's also good for the bottom line. New technology and increasing climate-based legislation is creating new business opportunities based on the circular economy. [Read more from Morgan Stanley.](#) *****

TROUBLE ON THE LEFT? -- "Poll: Voters skeptical of Feinstein reelection bid," by David Siders: "Half of likely California voters say Sen. Dianne Feinstein should not run for re-election, according to a new poll conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California. Forty-six percent of California adults and 50 percent of likely voters say Feinstein should not seek a sixth term, according to the poll. Yet the survey does not test Feinstein against any other potential candidate, and a majority of Democrats - 57 percent - say Feinstein should run again.

"Though Feinstein's public approval rating has ticked down slightly from January, it stands at a relatively favorable 48 percent among California adults and 54 percent among likely voters. The poll comes as Feinstein sustains increased criticism from her party's left flank, with the possibility of a Democratic challenger in next year's election." <http://politi.co/2wl9VFv>

MEDIAWATCH - MEGAN LIBERMAN is joining SiriusXM as SVP of news, talk and entertainment. She was previously VP and editor in chief of the Yahoo News Group and also spent 13 years at the New York Times.

-- **SUSAN GLASSER** will write a twice-monthly column for The New Yorker's website.

-- **ANDREA MITCHELL** was honored on Wednesday by the IRTS as a "Giant of Broadcasting." *Pic by Brian Stelter, who reports that Andrea told the crowd: "We are not the enemies of the people. We are the eyes and ears of the people"* <http://bit.ly/2xC6OKJ>

-- **"It's Official: 'The View' Adds Meghan McCain as Conservative Co-Host,"** by Variety's Elizabeth Wagmeister: "McCain has officially signed onto 'The View' as a regular co-host ... McCain is expected to start in early October, joining the panel of

Whoopi Goldberg, Joy Behar, Sara Haines, Paula Faris, and Sunny Hostin."

<http://bit.ly/2xD0iTZ>

Playbookers

SUNDAY SO FAR - "Fox News Sunday": Panel: Josh Holmes, Donna Edwards, Mike Needham, Charles Lane

SPOTTED -- Miss America Cara Mund was feted last night at Kent and Karen Knutson's home. Several fellow North Dakotans were on hand, including Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.) and Sen. John Hoeven (R-N.D.). ***Pic of Anna, Katie Pudwill and Kent with Mund*** <http://bit.ly/2xCPEwn> ... former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist last night drinking a margarita with salt from a martini glass while nibbling on chips at the bar at Bobby Van's on 15th Street.

--**SPOTTED:** Melania Trump yesterday at 1 World Trade Center. "But contrary to rumors, she wasn't visiting Condé Nast," per Michael Calderone's Morning Media.

OUT AND ABOUT -- Financier Steve Cohen and his philanthropic group hosted a reception for the Cohen Veterans Care Summit at Smithsonian American Art Museum last night to highlight efforts to combat invisible wounds impacting America's veterans and athletes. **SPOTTED:** NFL Hall of Famer Warren Sapp, former WWE star Chris Nowinski, Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.), former Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.), Bob Harward, Magali Haas, Lenore Karafa and Sergio Rodriguera Jr.

-- **House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi** was feted last night for 30 years of supporting LGBT equality in Congress at the Capitol Hill home of her deputy chief of staff and longtime spokesman Drew Hammill, and his husband Jason Mida. **SPOTTED:** Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.), Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.), Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.), Henry Munoz, Steve Elmendorf and Roddy Flynn.

-- **SPOTTED** last night at a Yelp and Zillow Oktoberfest-themed party at Dacha Beer Garden: event hosts Luther Lowe, Laurent Crenshaw, Angela Hooks, Ellen Haberle and Andrew Bianchi, Michael Petricone, Austin Carson, Ellen Satterwhite, Stewart Verdery, Chan Park, Jesse Blumenthal, Margaux Ewen, Evan Engstrom, Andrew Mills, Courtney Radsch, Zach Graves, Seamus Kraft and Nika Nour.

-- **SPOTTED** at a Log Cabin Republicans event last night at the Trump Hotel, headlined by Carly Fiorina: Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), Patrick Newton, Gregory Angelo.

TRANSITIONS -- Bill Russo is joining former Vice President Joe Biden's personal office as communications director. Russo spent the last nine months helping start Biden's foreign policy center at the University of Pennsylvania, and is a State, NSC and Obama White House alum.

-- **DENIS MCDONOUGH** is chairing a new group called the Rework America Task Force that will try to solve the skill gap problem.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Steve Dwyer, senior adviser to Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer, and **Kate Riley**, VP of government and public affairs at America's Public Television Stations, recently welcomed their third daughter, Lucy Jane. "She weighed in at 9lbs 2oz and measured 20.75 inches long. Big sisters Eleanor and Clara are in love with little Lucy and happy to have a third musketeer!" **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2hzz1Oe>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Steve Schmidt, vice chairman at Edelman, MSNBC political analyst and Bush, McCain and Schwarzenegger alum, is 47. **A fun fact about Steve:** "I have an absolutely perfect infallible photographic memory when it comes to every Russian I've ever met in my life." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2xNxJ8j>

BIRTHDAYS: AP's Andy Taylor (hat tip: Rebecca Adams) ... WaPo's Emily Heil ... Laura Quinn, CEO at Catalist (h/t Jon Haber) ... filmmaker Nadia Szold (h/t her proud brother Daniel Lippman) ... Politico's Poppy McDonald, Patrick D'Silva and Suhani Sanwar ... Scott Mulhauser, a fellow with Perry World House at U Penn (h/t Ben Chang) ... former Treasury Counselor Antonio Weiss is 51 ... Ayelet Cohen, the social secretary at the Israeli embassy ... Paul Nedeau, deputy chief of staff at Newark Public Schools, is 31 ... Jen O'Malley Dillon, co-founder and partner at Precision Strategies, former Obama deputy campaign manager and former DNC ED (h/t Tom Zigo) ... Texas Tribune D.C. bureau chief Abby Livingston ... Brent McIntosh is 44 ... BuzzFeed's Chris Geidner ... Politico alum Gabi Renz ... former Rep. Curt Clawson (R-Fla.) is 58 ... Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) is 6-0 ... Mattingly Messina, a comms and PR consultant in SF ... Bloomberg's Evelyn Erskine ... Kat Kane, deputy speechwriting director for Mayor De Blasio ... Phil Gallo ... Laura Santucci ... Reid alum Jon Summers ... AP alum Jeff Barnard is 67 ...

... **Brian Rogers**, SVP of Definers and a McCain alum (h/t Colin Reed) ... Del Wilber, WSJ DOJ reporter (h/ts Annie Linskey and Brody Mullins) ... Molly Crosby of Planned Parenthood ... Hortense Goulard ... Jane Abraham, wife of former DOE Secretary Spence Abraham (h/t Ed Cash) ... Calley Means ... Ron Meyer ... Rohan Patel ... Matt Corridoni of Team Moulton ... Will Thompson, policy analyst at the Charles Group (h/t Hayley Andrews) ... Dorothy Lutz ... Rory Murphy of Squire Patton Boggs (h/t fiancée Alex Miller) ... ProPublica's Joanna Brenner ... Steve Largent ... Darren Grubb ... Katie List ... Katie Smith ... WaPo's Julie Bone ... Steve Largent ... Peter Well DiBella ... Dave Davis ... Kyle Ashby ... Tony Case ... Melissa Charbonneau ... Marty Machowsky ... Kathy Wagner ... Kimberly Butler ... Brandon Hynes ... Carol Stetelman Abshire ... Martin Edwin Andersen ... Ryan Olsen ... Kate Sheckells (h/t Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley** : Refurbishing, reusing and recycling are helping to squeeze more life out of all the 'stuff' being consumed. Could this be the next big disruptive trend in global markets? A report from Morgan Stanley argues that new technology and increasing climate-based legislation around the world is creating new business opportunities based on the circular economy. A circular economy uses

products, materials and resources for as long as possible, by refurbishing, sharing, leasing or recycling. The goal is to extend product life cycles, generating environmental and economic benefits along the way. Pioneering companies in a number of sectors are already shifting in this direction. The global economy, driven by consumer frenzy to have the latest, best new model, now must contend with climate change, water scarcity and damage to the physical environment. Companies that embrace these trends can find new revenue streams and cut costs. [Read more from Morgan Stanley.](#) *****

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Subject: White House Report: Daily Wrap and Top Stories, 12/15/17

Daily Wrap

ABC News (Stephanie Ebbs) - Lead and copper pipe rule and request to be added to press distro list.

Bloomberg (Jennifer Dlouhy) - Unified agenda on GHG program for vehicles.

Bloomberg Law (Stephen Joyce) - Seeking confirmation on Region 5 Administrator announcement.

Chemical and Engineering News (Michael Torrice); Circle of Blue (Brett Walton) - Lead in drinking water.

CQ Roll Call (Jackie Toth) - Barrasso letter re: uranium mining proposal.

CQ Rollcall (Jackie Toth) - Carper and Whitehouse's concerns about consent decree directive.

E&E (Sean Reilly) - Control techniques guidelines for existing oil and gas facilities.

E&E News (Zack Colman) - White House meeting on Kigali Amendment.

Inside EPA (Doug Obey) - Potential reorganization plans for regional offices.

Mashable (Heather Dockray) - Photo of EPA drinking fountain.

Mashable (Jason Abbruzzese); Mother Jones (Rebecca Leber); New York Times (Lisa Friedman); -

Definers Corp. EPA contract.

New York Times (Eric Taub) - Specific octane grade usage in fuel efficiency testing.

Spectrum TV Network (Silvia Gambardella) - Wastewater permits.

Waste Dive (Cody Boteler) - RFS negotiations.

Region 2

Niagara Gazette (Philip Gambini) - Eighteen Mile Creek Superfund site.

Poughkeepsie Journal (Amy Wu) - Hudson River PCBs.

Top Stories

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/senate-confirms-two-trump-epa-nominees-after-dourson-withdrawal/article/2643578>

Senate confirms two Trump EPA nominees after Dourson withdrawal

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/12/dourson-says-withdrawal-avoids-politicizing-epa-mission-276864>

Dourson says withdrawal avoids 'politicizing' EPA mission

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/12/senate-confirms-two-to-epa-positions-276472>

Senate confirms 2 to EPA positions

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/12/epa-says-it-has-authority-to-issue-climate-regulations-273943>

EPA says it has authority to issue climate regulations

<http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2017/12/14/epa-dumb-dangerous-lead-advice/108604630/>

EPA seeks advice on 'dumb and dangerous' lead rule

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-epa-lead/epa-seeks-input-to-rework-rule-on-lead-in-drinking-water-idUSKBN1E82MK>

EPA seeks input to rework rule on lead in drinking water

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=125137645&item=408&prod=deln&cat=AGENC

Trump to Tackle Air Permitting Changes, Delay Lead Regulation

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/12/14/trumps-epa-will-update-decades-old-regulation-to-keep-lead-out-of-water/>

Trump's EPA Will Update Decades-Old Regulation To Keep Lead Out Of Water

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=125137657&item=408&prod=deln&cat=AGENC

EPA Urges Supreme Court to Reject Review of Wastewater Policies

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/12/watchdog-to-review-epa-response-to-hurricanes-272545>

Watchdog to review EPA response to hurricanes

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/inspector-general-to-review-epas-2017-hurricane-response/2017/12/14/2e60f4b0-e11f-11e7-b2e9-8c636f076c76_story.html?utm_term=.0f158f008a9d

Inspector general to review EPA's 2017 hurricane response

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2017/12/15/trump-environmental-officials-are-keeping-tight-rein-over-stampede-of-foia-requests/?utm_term=.49da9e81a7e3

Trump environmental officials are keeping tight rein over stampede of FOIA requests

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/AP9e4908fa38324a6a83e5dac9a86290f7>

NY officials threaten to sue EPA over Hudson PCB dredging

<https://www.eenews.net/energywire/stories/1060069131/search?keyword=EPA>

Deadly H2S gas worrying residents, state regulators

<https://www.politicopro.com/agriculture/whiteboard/2017/12/wotus-repeal-and-replace-timeline-slips-again-in-unified-agenda-273697>

WOTUS repeal-and-replace timeline slips again in Unified Agenda

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-pesticides-missouri/missouri-issues-first-fines-over-misuse-of-farm-chemical-in-2016-idUSKBN1E900N>

Missouri issues first fines over misuse of farm chemical in 2016

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/14/us/politics/trump-federal-regulations.html? r=0>

Trump Says His Regulatory Rollback Already Is the 'Most Far-Reaching'

<http://thehill.com/regulation/administration/364969-trump-touts-deregulation-by-his-administration>

Trump touts deregulation by his administration

[h/1https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/12/omb-completes-review-of-clean-power-plan-rulemaking-277417](https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/12/omb-completes-review-of-clean-power-plan-rulemaking-277417)

OMB completes review of Clean Power Plan rulemaking

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060069091/search?keyword=EPA>

Clean Power Plan to be fully terminated in 10 months

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060069093/search?keyword=EPA>

World's largest carbon market poised to start slowly

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/that-ear-splitting-leaf-blower-it-also-emits-more-pollution-than-a-car-1513346400>

That Ear-Splitting Leaf Blower? It Also Emits More Pollution Than a Car

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/12/14/stories/1060069063>

'There's sewage covering the floors' at headquarters

Nicholas Sorokin and Jessica Sparacino

Office of Media Relations Interns

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]
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EPA Morning News Highlights 10.18.17

Reason: CNN Smears Sensible EPA Decision

Did you happen to catch CNN's latest smear? Anderson Cooper's show recently featured a "two-part exclusive" that claims Donald Trump's EPA director had conspired with the CEO of a mining company to "withdraw environmental restrictions" so the company could dig "the largest open pit mine in the world in an extremely sensitive watershed in wild Alaska." The report was enough to horrify any caring person. CNN showed beautiful pictures of colorful salmon swimming in Bristol Bay, and the reporter intoned dramatically, "EPA staffers were shocked to receive this email obtained exclusively by CNN which says 'we have been directed by the administrator to withdraw restrictions'... Protection of that pristine area was being removed."

E&E News: Pesticide lobbyist now Pruitt adviser

U.S. EPA has brought on a former Syngenta AG lobbyist as a top adviser to Administrator Scott Pruitt. Jeff Sands, who was manager of federal government and industry relations for the pesticide giant for the past two years, started at the agency this week as a senior adviser to Pruitt for agriculture, an EPA official told E&E News. Pruitt said Sands' knowledge of agriculture issues would be an asset to the agency. "Jeff has spent his career working to help agriculture stakeholders across the country to provide for Americans while also protecting our natural resources. His expertise in agriculture issues will be essential to advancing Agency goals moving forward," the EPA chief said in a statement.

The Daily Signal: EPA Pushes Back on Practice That Environmentalist Groups Used to Dictate Agenda

When environmental pressure groups can promote their agendas through closed-door rule-making with the Environmental Protection Agency, something has gone seriously wrong with the regulatory process. This is precisely what has been happening at federal agencies in recent years—but not for much longer at the EPA. On Monday, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt issued a directive to put an end to this process, which is called “sue and settle.” On the surface, sue and

settle doesn't sound bad. An organization sues a federal agency to compel it to issue regulations, which the agency was already required to do under the law. Instead of litigating, the agency just settles the dispute.

CNN: Scientists receiving federal grants will be cut from EPA advising roles

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt says scientists who sit on EPA advisory boards and committees who have also received federal grants for studies could be cut from their roles as soon as next week, citing a lack of objectivity in their research. Speaking at a Heritage Foundation event on Tuesday, Pruitt said that scientists who serve on those advisory boards who have also received funding from the EPA may not be "objective." "There are dozens and dozens of these folks. Over the years these individuals, as they've served in those capacities, guess what's also happened? They've received monies through grants, and often substantial monies through grants," he said.

The Daily Caller: Trump's EPA Will Crack Down On Using Science Advisers Who Benefit From Taxpayer Grants

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt will soon issue a directive to "ensure the independence and transparency and objectivity with respect to the scientific advice that we're getting at the agency," he said on Tuesday. Pruitt said he would issue a directive next week addressing potential conflicts of interest among EPA scientific advisers. Pruitt made the announcement while speaking at the conservative Heritage Foundation. Pruitt said many EPA advisers benefit from generous agency-funded research grants, which he says may affect their objectivity. He believes his upcoming directive will address the issue.

National Morning News Highlights 10.18.17

The Hill: Mnuchin: 'Extraordinary' if tax reform gets done this year

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on Tuesday said it would be "extraordinary" if the Republican Party is able to pull off tax reform by the end of the year. "It took Ronald Reagan over two years on a bipartisan basis to get tax reform done," Mnuchin said during an interview on Fox News' "Special Report with Bret Baier." "If we get it done this year, it will be extraordinary." "Our objective is to get it on the President's desk by December to get him to sign it this year," Mnuchin added, but cautioned that there's "no artificial deadline." "We are going to work on it as fast as we can," the treasury secretary added.

McClatchy DC: Trump's small-dollar donors fuel surge in GOP fundraising

The Republican National Committee raised more than \$100 million in the first nine months of 2017, marking the first time it has raised that much, that fast, in a non-presidential election year. The record-breaking fundraising can be largely attributed to a flurry of small-dollar donors responding to fundraising appeals by the first Republican president in eight years, Donald Trump, according to a new report to be released later this week and obtained by McClatchy. The numbers give Republicans a large cash advantage over Democrats as they look to retain control of both chambers of Congress in the midterm elections next year.

Wall Street Journal: Amid ACA Turmoil, Insurers Brace for Drop in Enrollment

With enrollment for 2018 Affordable Care Act health-insurance plans starting in just two weeks, insurers are bracing for a drop-off among consumers put off by higher rates, confusion about the law's standing and a shorter window to choose coverage. Companies like Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Florida Blue and Medica are rushing to shore up their customer base as the future of the 2010 health law continues to be debated on Capitol Hill, where two senators Tuesday announced a tentative deal aimed at bolstering the ACA marketplaces. The insurers are using advertising, letters, emails and other outreach techniques to reassure enrollees about their insurance options under the ACA in 2018.

TRUMP TWEETS

Reason

<http://reason.com/archives/2017/10/18/cnn-smears-sensible-epa-decision>

CNN Smears Sensible EPA Decision

By John Stossel, 10/18/17

Did you happen to catch CNN's latest smear?

Anderson Cooper's show recently featured a "two-part exclusive" that claims Donald Trump's

EPA director had conspired with the CEO of a mining company to "withdraw environmental restrictions" so the company could dig "the largest open pit mine in the world in an extremely sensitive watershed in wild Alaska."

The report was enough to horrify any caring person. CNN showed beautiful pictures of colorful salmon swimming in Bristol Bay, and the reporter intoned dramatically, "EPA staffers were shocked to receive this email obtained exclusively by CNN which says 'we have been directed by the administrator to withdraw restrictions'... Protection of that pristine area was being removed."

No! A "pristine" area and gorgeous salmon were about to be obliterated by a mine!

I would have believed it, except I happened to report on that mine a couple years ago.

I knew that the real scandal was not EPA director Scott Pruitt's decision to "withdraw the restrictions"; it was what President Obama's EPA did to the company's mining proposal in the first place.

Zealots at the EPA had conspired with rich environmental activists to kill the mine before its environmental impact statement could even be submitted.

This was unprecedented.

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform later concluded: "EPA employees had inappropriate contact with outside groups and failed to conduct an impartial, fact-based review."

Now, appropriately, Pruitt undid that censorship of science.

But CNN, implying devious secrecy said, "according to multiple sources, he made that decision without a briefing from any of EPA's scientists."

Shocking!

But Pruitt didn't require opinions from scientists. He didn't approve the mine. He didn't make a science decision. He simply followed the law and allowed a company to submit a proposal.

Also, despite CNN's repeated depictions of salmon on Bristol Bay, it turns out that the proposed mine would not even be on the Bay. It would not even be 10 miles away, or 20 miles away, or even 50 miles. The proposed mine would be about 100 miles away.

Did CNN mention that? No. Never. We asked CNN why. And why not point out that the mining company is just being allowed to start the EPA's long and arduous environmental review? They didn't get back to us.

Of course, explaining that wouldn't fit CNN's theme: Evil Trump appointee ravages environment.

Their reporter did at least speak with the mine's CEO, Tom Collier, who tried to explain.

"It's not a science—it's a process decision."

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060063929>

Pesticide lobbyist now Pruitt adviser

By Kevin Bogardus, 10/18/17

U.S. EPA has brought on a former Syngenta AG lobbyist as a top adviser to Administrator Scott Pruitt.

Jeff Sands, who was manager of federal government and industry relations for the pesticide giant for the past two years, started at the agency this week as a senior adviser to Pruitt for agriculture, an EPA official told E&E News.

Pruitt said Sands' knowledge of agriculture issues would be an asset to the agency.

"Jeff has spent his career working to help agriculture stakeholders across the country to provide for Americans while also protecting our natural resources. His expertise in agriculture issues will be essential to advancing Agency goals moving forward," the EPA chief said in a statement.

Before working at Syngenta, Sands was director of public policy for the Agricultural Retailers Association from 2012 to 2015. He also has Capitol Hill experience, having helped handle agricultural issues as an aide to Rep. Tom Marino (R-Pa.), prior to joining the trade group.

Sands has a master's degree in public administration as well as a bachelor's degree in organizational communication from Valdosta State University. He also has a degree in environmental horticulture from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

Since 2012, Sands was a registered lobbyist for ARA and then later Syngenta. Lobbying disclosure records show that he lobbied on several issues that could affect EPA, including the renewable fuel standard, the Clean Water Act as well as various policies dealing with pesticides.

The Daily Signal

<http://dailysignal.com/2017/10/17/epa-pushes-back-practice-environmentalist-groups-used-dictate-agenda/>

EPA Pushes Back on Practice That Environmentalist Groups Used to Dictate Agenda

By Daren Bakst, 10/17/17

When environmental pressure groups can promote their agendas through closed-door rule-making with the Environmental Protection Agency, something has gone seriously wrong with the regulatory process.

This is precisely what has been happening at federal agencies in recent years—but not for much longer at the EPA. On Monday, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt issued a directive to put an end to this process, which is called “sue and settle.”

On the surface, sue and settle doesn’t sound bad. An organization sues a federal agency to compel it to issue regulations, which the agency was already required to do under the law. Instead of litigating, the agency just settles the dispute.

If only that was how it worked in practice. In reality, sue and settle has many problems. Under sue and settle, environmental pressure groups have been able to file cases, meet with the agency in private, and then settle with the agency, effectively dictating the agency’s agenda.

Even when the agency is merely agreeing to meet a deadline as required by law, the agency and the environmental group will enter into agreements that create unrealistic timelines that can lead to bad policy. They can set deadlines to avoid many of the regulatory safeguards that exist, such as proper cost-benefit analysis.

In many of these cases, there is often a question of whether a federal agency is even required to issue regulations—yet the agency simply caves to the environmental group and does as the group desires.

Even worse, agencies have worked with these environmental groups to develop the substance of regulations before they are even proposed to the public.

And very often, the public is not even aware that the agency is being sued, and will find it very difficult to intervene or have any real voice in providing a different perspective on the lawsuit. This closed process stands in stark contrast to how the federal regulatory system is supposed to work.

The Administrative Procedure Act, which governs the federal rule-making process, was designed to provide notice to the public, allow for public participation, and give the public a meaningful voice in the regulatory process. Sue and settle circumvents this entire process.

The EPA, though, is taking action. Here's what the EPA directive says:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in partnership with the states, serves a vital role in protecting human health and the environment. When conducting agency action to achieve these objectives, the EPA must strive to promote transparency and public participation to provide the American public with due process, accountability, and a sense of fair dealing.

To stop sue and settle, the EPA explains it will do the following, among other things:

- Inform the public that the agency is being sued.
- Reach out to affected parties about proposed settlements.
- Provide sufficient time for rule-makings, including to receive public comments.
- Allow the public to comment on any proposed settlements and request public hearings.
- Ensure that the EPA is actually required by law to issue regulations as requested by the special interests. The agency won't take what isn't a requirement and make it one through a settlement agreement.
- When settling a case, seek to exclude the payment of attorney's fees and costs to plaintiffs.

The EPA should be commended for taking this much-needed action against sue and settle.

Other agencies, such as the Department of Interior, need to follow the EPA's lead. Congress also needs to pass legislation to do away with this sue and settle abuse so that it can't happen in the future.

CNN

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/17/politics/pruitt-epa-science-adviser-cuts/index.html>

Pruitt: Scientists receiving federal grants will be cut from EPA advising roles

By Miranda Green and Sophie Tatum, 10/17/17

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt says scientists who sit on EPA advisory boards and committees who have also received federal grants for studies could be cut from their roles as soon as next week, citing a lack of objectivity in their research.

Speaking at a Heritage Foundation event on Tuesday, Pruitt said that scientists who serve on those advisory boards who have also received funding from the EPA may not be "objective."

"There are dozens and dozens of these folks. Over the years these individuals, as they've served in those capacities, guess what's also happened? They've received monies through grants, and often substantial monies through grants," he said.

Pruitt said having individuals on EPA advisory boards who have received grants from the agency raises red flags.

"That to me causes question on the independence and the veracity and the transparency of those recommendations that are coming our way," he said.

Pruitt said he would act next week to "fix that."

"I'm going to issue a directive that addresses that -- that is much like sue and settle -- to insure the independence and transparency and objectivity in regard to the scientific advice we are getting at the agency," he said.

Jennifer Sass, the Natural Resources Defense Council's health program senior scientist, said Pruitt's goal was to "get rid of scientists who tell us the facts about threats to our environment and health."

The "sue and settle" directive Pruitt referenced was a practice the agency announced it was ending on Monday.

"The days of regulation through litigation are over," Pruitt said in Monday's statement. "We will no longer go behind closed doors and use consent decrees and settlement agreements to resolve

lawsuits filed against the agency by special interest groups where doing so would circumvent the regulatory process set forth by Congress. Additionally, gone are the days of routinely paying tens of thousands of dollars in attorney's fees to these groups with which we swiftly settle."

During his speech at the Heritage Foundation, Pruitt also confirmed that he's looking at a red team-blue team approach into questions about climate change.

The concept of red team-blue team is generally associated with the military and intelligence organizations to simulate security scenarios.

"The American people deserve an objective, transparent and honest discussion about what we know or don't know with respect to CO2 -- it's never taken place." Pruitt said. "And that's the reason I have been proposing a red team-blue team exercise ... where we'd bring red team scientists in and blue team scientists in and they would engage in a multi-month process asking of each other these very difficult questions to help inform the American public on these issues to help build consensus towards this very important issue."

Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Bruce also opposed Pruitt's announcement.

"Of course Scott Pruitt doesn't want to support science, because science makes clear that Pruitt's policies are disastrous for the health of our kids and our communities," Bruce said. "For Pruitt, anything that helps corporate polluters make money is good and science and facts are just roadblocks he wants to tear down."

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/10/17/trumps-epa-will-crack-down-on-using-science-advisers-who-benefit-from-taxpayer-grants/>

Trump's EPA Will Crack Down On Using Science Advisers Who Benefit From Taxpayer Grants

By Michael Bastash, 10/17/17

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt will soon issue a directive to “ensure the independence and transparency and objectivity with respect to the scientific advice that we’re getting at the agency,” he said on Tuesday.

Pruitt said he would issue a directive next week addressing potential conflicts of interest among EPA scientific advisers. Pruitt made the announcement while speaking at the conservative Heritage Foundation.

Pruitt said many EPA advisers benefit from generous agency-funded research grants, which he says may affect their objectivity. He believes his upcoming directive will address the issue.

“Next week we’re going to fix that,” he said.

Pruitt’s upcoming directive will be the second issued in two weeks. Pruitt signed a directive on Monday aiming to end so-called “sue and settle” agreements EPA enters into with environmentalists.

Republicans have worried about conflicts of interest among EPA advisers for years. House lawmakers passed a bill to block scientists currently taking EPA money from serving on agency advisory boards.

Oklahoma Republican Sen. Jim Inhofe called into question EPA’s process for choosing its scientific advisers since the majority of them benefit from agency funding.

“I have observed EPA, under the Obama Administration, cherry-picking the same allies to serve on this advisory committee and its subcommittees at the expense of having an open and robust process for selecting external advisers,” Inhofe wrote in a 2016 letter to EPA.

“The majority of CASAC members have also received considerable financial support from EPA, which calls into question their independence and therefore the integrity of the overall panel,” Inhofe wrote.

That year, Energy & Environment Legal Institute attorney Steve Milloy found EPA’s Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC), which advises the agency on air quality regulations, was stacked with members getting federal funding.

EELI sued EPA to prevent CASAC from meeting, arguing that its objectivity was compromised since 24 of its 26 members had gotten, or are the current recipients of, EPA grants.

In total, panel members received more than \$190 million from EPA. Milloy also found 17 of the 20 scientific advisers sitting on EPA’s ozone panel got \$192 million in EPA grant.

“Over the years, those individuals, as they’ve served in those capacities, guess what’s also happened?” Pruitt told an audience at the Heritage Foundation. “They’ve received monies through grants, and sometimes substantial monies through grants.”

“And if we have individuals that are on those boards receiving money from the agency, sometimes going back years and years, to the tune of literally tens of millions of dollars over time,” Pruitt said, “that to me causes question on the independence and the veracity and the transparency of those recommendations that are coming our way.”

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/355946-mnuchin-extraordinary-if-tax-reform-gets-done-this-year>

Mnuchin: 'Extraordinary' if tax reform gets done this year

By John Bowden, 10/17/17

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on Tuesday said it would be "extraordinary" if the Republican Party is able to pull off tax reform by the end of the year.

"It took Ronald Reagan over two years on a bipartisan basis to get tax reform done," Mnuchin said during an interview on Fox News' "Special Report with Bret Baier." "If we get it done this year, it will be extraordinary."

"Our objective is to get it on the President's desk by December to get him to sign it this year," Mnuchin added, but cautioned that there's "no artificial deadline."

"We are going to work on it as fast as we can," the treasury secretary added.

Mnuchin called the GOP plan to reform the tax code critical to creating a "competitive" environment for American businesses.

"We have to get it done to create economic growth and competitive business system," Mnuchin said. "We have one of the highest corporate tax rates in the world. We tax on world-wide income. We have a concept of deferral to leave the money offshore, you don't pay taxes. Trillions of dollars are sitting offshore."

"This is all about making American business competitive," he added.

On Monday, Trump made similar remarks at a press conference with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), where he cautioned that Congress still has a "long way" to go on tax reform.

"I would like to see it be done this year," Trump said. "But don't forget it took years for the Reagan administration to get taxes done — I've been here for nine months."

“We could have a long way to go but that’s okay,” he added.

McClatchy DC

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/election/article179293446.html>

Trump's small-dollar donors fuel surge in GOP fundraising

By Anita Kumar, 10/18/17

The Republican National Committee raised more than \$100 million in the first nine months of 2017, marking the first time it has raised that much, that fast, in a non-presidential election year.

The record-breaking fundraising can be largely attributed to a flurry of small-dollar donors responding to fundraising appeals by the first Republican president in eight years, Donald Trump, according to a new report to be released later this week and obtained by McClatchy.

The numbers give Republicans a large cash advantage over Democrats as they look to retain control of both chambers of Congress in the midterm elections next year.

Last month, the RNC hired state directors in 17 states across the nation, including Florida, Missouri and North Carolina, as part of what the party says will be the most expansive midterm field program in its history.

“This month’s numbers show once again that Americans of all backgrounds approve of the direction our country is headed under Republican leadership,” RNC Finance Chairman Steve Wynn said in a statement. “We are grateful to our generous donors who allow us to continue to expand our Republican majorities.”

The RNC raised \$10.4 million in September, according to a report it will file with the Federal Elections Commission by Friday's deadline. It has raised \$104.4 million this year and has \$44.1 million in the bank.

The Democratic National Committee, which kicks off its fall meeting Thursday in Las Vegas, has not yet released its fundraising for September.

But through August, Republicans had raised almost twice as much as the Democrats and had nearly seven times as much money in the bank. The RNC had raised \$93.3 million with \$47.1 million cash on hand while the DNC raised \$46.3 million and had \$6.8 million cash on hand.

Trump collected a record-settling \$239 million from donors who contributed \$200 or less during his 2016 campaign. So far this year, almost 60 percent — more than \$44 million of the \$75 million the RNC raised in direct contributions — came from small donations, often after Trump sent pleas asking supporters to “drain the swamp” of business as usual. More than 98 percent of those who gave to the RNC were small-dollar donors.

Some donations, too, are helping foot the bills for legal fees stemming from various investigations into whether Trump associates worked with Russia to meddle in the presidential election. The RNC has spent more than \$400,000 on legal fees this year.

In the Senate, Democrats need a net gain of three seats for a majority. But Inside Elections, a nonpartisan newsletter, sees only two Republican seats as toss-ups — Dean Heller's in Nevada and Jeff Flake's in Arizona — and estimates four Democratic seats are up for grabs.

In the House, the GOP has 240 House seats, with 218 needed for a majority. Inside Elections estimates that 48 Republican and 14 Democratic seats are in play next year.

The money will also help the party get ready for the 2020 presidential race through hiring field staff and circulating the party's message, among other things.

Trump's re-election campaign announced Monday that it had raised more \$25 million this year. That includes \$10.1 million during the three months ending Sept. 30, \$1.2 million of which came from contributions of \$200 or less.

This year, the RNC has pumped money into the battleground state of Virginia, one of two states with gubernatorial races this year.

With three weeks left until Election Day, it has spent \$3 million in Virginia to aid Republican Ed Gillespie and helped fund 85 field staffers, along with the state party and Republican Governors Association. That's a larger in-state presence than Republicans had there in 2016. Republicans have made 1.5 million door knocks and 680,000 calls and amassed 1,700 volunteers.

"Our record-breaking fundraising has been fueled by grassroots enthusiasm for President Trump and the Republican Party," RNC Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel said in a statement. "The overwhelming support has enabled the RNC to have a virtually uninterrupted presence in key states like Virginia since 2013."

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/health-insurers-step-up-open-enrollment-push-as-window-to-sign-up-shrinks-1508319002>

Amid ACA Turmoil, Insurers Brace for Drop in Enrollment

By Anna Wilde Mathews, 10/18/17

With enrollment for 2018 Affordable Care Act health-insurance plans starting in just two weeks, insurers are bracing for a drop-off among consumers put off by higher rates, confusion about the law's standing and a shorter window to choose coverage.

Companies like Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Florida Blue and Medica are rushing to

shore up their customer base as the future of the 2010 health law continues to be debated on Capitol Hill, where two senators Tuesday announced a tentative deal aimed at bolstering the ACA marketplaces. The insurers are using advertising, letters, emails and other outreach techniques to reassure enrollees about their insurance options under the ACA in 2018.

Other industry players, including online insurance vendor eHealth Inc., EHTH -2.50% see an opening to offer consumers cheaper alternatives to ACA policies. While less comprehensive, these plans could become more appealing if the Trump administration moves forward with loosening some restrictions on them, as the president proposed in an executive order last week.

Separately, the Trump administration said it would halt payments to insurers that are used to reduce health-care costs for low-income ACA enrollees. Partly because of the anticipated loss of those federal payments, expected to total \$7 billion this year, major insurers are sharply raising rates in many states.

And many firms say they expect to lose consumers who will bear the full brunt of the rate increases—those who aren't eligible for the health law's premium subsidies, which help enrollees with annual incomes of less than around \$48,000.

“The people we'll lose will likely be the ones who have affordability issues,” said Rick Notter, an executive at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. The insurer is raising rates on its ACA health maintenance organization plans by around 23% on average. It predicts the state's ACA enrollment will drop by around 9% next year.

Despite significant rate increases in 2017, enrollment in ACA plans by subsidized consumers rose an estimated 5.4% in the second quarter of this year compared with a year earlier, according to Oliver Wyman, a consulting unit of Marsh & McLennan. But enrollment in individual coverage by people not receiving subsidies dropped around 22.4%.

“We will likely see this accelerate in 2018,” said Kurt Giesa, a partner at Oliver Wyman.

Insurers are particularly nervous about losing healthy enrollees like Daniel Ramos, a 29-year-old

massage therapist and personal trainer in Richmond, Va.

Mr. Ramos, who says he rarely needs health care, was already skeptical about spending around \$250 a month for his current ACA plan from Anthem Inc. ANTM 1.90% Next year, the only insurer expected to still sell ACA coverage in Richmond, Cigna Corp. CI 1.19% , will boost rates 51% on average across all of its Virginia exchange offerings.

Mr. Ramos, who doesn't get a premium subsidy, says he isn't sure he will buy an ACA plan again if the options are far more expensive—despite the risk of a penalty under the health law's coverage mandate.

“It feels like a big money hole,” he says of the premiums he pays. “If it becomes more, I'd rather just go ahead and take the hit and pay the fine next year.”

Insurers fear other factors could weigh on 2018 exchange sign-ups, too. The open enrollment period this year will start on Nov. 1 in most states and last only about six weeks—shorter than in previous years. And the Trump administration has cut back on advertising and other outreach efforts.

Industry officials also point to confusion over the status of ACA after months of talk about repealing the law and the president's comments about Obamacare being “dead” and “finished.” Despite the tentative Senate deal—which would restore the federal cost-sharing payments and, potentially, funding for ACA outreach—passing legislation before the start of November would be a heavy lift for Congress.

“It's all of those things together” that will push down enrollment, along with “the sheer size of the rates,” said Chet Burrell, chief executive of CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, who predicts a “decline that will be quite substantial.”

CareFirst's ACA rates in Maryland are going up 34.5% for health maintenance organization plans and 50% for preferred provider organization plans. The insurer is seeking permission from the state insurance regulator to make a further boost because of the halt to federal cost-sharing

payments.

A spokesman for the Department of Health and Human Services said the ACA marketplaces were troubled before the president took office, and that Mr. Trump's executive order "is intended to provide Americans with more affordable health-care choices and allow them to exercise greater control over their health-care decisions."

Despite the uncertainty, insurers say they're focused on making sure consumers know when to sign up and understand what's available. For many people with subsidies, the rate increases will be largely neutralized because the federal help will rise in tandem with the cost of plans. Those who don't get subsidies may find that rate hikes are far sharper on middle-tier "silver" plans, but less for other types, because of how insurers in some states loaded their increases.

Insurers will likely be helped by an automatic re-enrollment process that remains in effect for this year, pushing passive consumers into new plans.

But that automatic process could mean some consumers will be signed up for coverage with big rate increases and won't realize it until they are billed later on.

"We're trying to remind people, 'shop, shop, shop,' " said Geoff Bartsh, a vice president at Medica, an ACA insurer.

Medica, which is raising rates around 30% or more in states including Iowa, Nebraska and Wisconsin, is sending letters to people who will automatically be signed up for its plans. It is also setting up a special website to help them pick the best option.

Florida Blue, meanwhile, has created new, lower-cost plans at the cheapest ACA bronze level to appeal to people who don't get subsidies, said Jon Urbanek, a senior vice president at the insurer. The insurer is also sending postcards to prompt people to shop during open enrollment, and is holding events around the state. "People are seeing all kinds of confusing messages out there,"

Mr. Urbanek said, so the insurer is trying to reassure them.

For companies that provide cheaper non-ACA products with fewer benefits, the open enrollment season may offer a chance to snag more customers.

“We expect a continued acceleration in demand,” said Gavin Southwell, chief executive of Health Insurance Innovations Inc., which sells short-term insurance.

Short-term products often are sold only to people who qualify as healthy, lack certain benefits like maternity care, and don’t cover costs related to pre-existing conditions. Under current regulations, the plans can’t be sold with durations longer than three months, though that will likely stretch to nearly a year in many states under changes pushed by Mr. Trump’s executive order. Also, people with short-term plans can still be hit by the ACA’s coverage mandate penalty.

EHealth, the online insurance vendor, is rolling out new packages that pull together products including short-term insurance, coverage of online and telephonic doctor visits and indemnity plans, which generally pay a set sum toward medical services such as a hospital stay. The bundles provide limited protection compared with ACA plans. For instance, they lack full prescription-drug coverage, though they sometimes include discounts on certain medications. But they are expected to be cheaper than health-law plans.

The packages are for “those folks who want coverage but are facing that affordability barrier when they look at the major medical” plans sold under the ACA, said Paul Rooney, a vice president at eHealth.

When J. Mitchell Stockdale shopped for ACA plans last year, he said he found premiums too expensive. So this September, the 53-year-old retired engineering manager in Lenoir City, Tenn., decided to buy an eHealth package with an indemnity plan and dental coverage.

The health plan has limited benefits, including \$2,000 a day for hospital stays, which is less than many hospitals typically bill. But Mr. Stockdale, who isn’t eligible for ACA plan premium

subsidies, says he is betting he won't have major health needs.

"It's a small risk," he said. "I'm willing to take it."

TRUMP TWEETS

- 

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 3h

Wow, FBI confirms report that James Comey drafted letter exonerating Crooked Hillary Clinton long before investigation was complete. Many..

5.8K 9.0K 29K
- 

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 2h

...people not interviewed, including Clinton herself. Comey stated under oath that he didn't do this-obviously a fix? Where is Justice Dept?

6.8K 7.5K 26K
- 

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 2h

The Democrats will only vote for Tax Increases. Hopefully, all Senate Republicans will vote for the largest Tax Cuts in U.S. history.

5.6K 5.6K 23K
- 

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 2h

As it has turned out, James Comey lied and leaked and totally protected Hillary Clinton. He was the best thing that ever happened to her!

8.9K 8.0K 28K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 2h

The NFL has decided that it will not force players to stand for the playing of our National Anthem. Total disrespect for our great country!

💬 17K

↻ 7.8K

❤️ 31K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 1h

Democrat Congresswoman totally fabricated what I said to the wife of a soldier who died in action (and I have proof). Sad!

💬 24K

↻ 7.8K

❤️ 28K



To: Friedman, Lisa[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 9:54:58 PM
Subject: Re: apologies for all the back and forth

That is correct - 120 annually or 10 a month. The old vendor was 207 annually. A savings of 87,000.

On Dec 15, 2017, at 4:36 PM, Friedman, Lisa <lisa.friedman@nytimes.com> wrote:

ok. the contract says \$120K - that's not accurate?

On Fri, Dec 15, 2017 at 4:32 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services.

This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient.

If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.

> On Dec 15, 2017, at 3:09 PM, Friedman, Lisa <lisa.friedman@nytimes.com> wrote:

>

> But a few more things were just brought to my attention that require a few more questions.

>

> America Rising, which as you know shares top leadership with Definers Corp., has filed more than 200 FOIAs with EPA since 2015. Most recently they have requested information, including emails and other data, about a number of EPA employees - including many who have spoken out publicly against the agency like Betsy Southerland, Michael Cox and John O'Grady.

>

> Can you please offer me a comment on whether EPA believes it is appropriate to hire a firm that shares ownership with an organization that has investigated its employees?

>

> Thank you

> Lisa

>

> --

> Lisa Friedman

> Reporter, New York Times

> (202) 862-0306 office
> (202) 251-2083 cell
>

--

Lisa Friedman
Reporter, New York Times
(202) 862-0306 office
(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]
From: Kevin Bogardus
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 2:53:54 PM
Subject: Definers Corp. contract with EPA

Hey everyone,

It's Kevin Bogardus with E&E News.

I'm working on a piece about Definers Corp.'s contract with EPA (<https://www.usaspending.gov/transparency/Pages/TransactionDetails.aspx?RecordID=53D2AF0E-B566-47BB-8EB4-728DAC00CEB7&AwardID=59978626&AwardType=C>). I had a few questions about this, which are:

-- How did this contract happen? Did Definers approach EPA first or did EPA approach Definers first?

-- What services will Definers be providing EPA? Will Definers be providing "war room" services to EPA (https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3d6ea3_c21da991906e440eba09e35b63bbcc10.pdf)?

-- A search of [usaspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) shows that Definers' contract with EPA is Definers' first contract with EPA (<https://www.usaspending.gov/Pages/AdvancedSearch.aspx?sub=y&ST=C&FY=2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011>). Is that accurate?

Please get back to me as soon as possible. My deadline is 12:30 pm EST today but the sooner you get back to me, the more it helps my reporting. Also, since I'm working from home today, please email me here or call my cell phone at 202-247-7844. Thank you for your help.

Kevin Bogardus

E&E News Reporter

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EnergyWire, ClimateWire, E&E Daily, Greenwire, E&ENews PM, E&ETV

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 1/4/2018 11:19:20 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Better Medicare Alliance: WHAT A DAY: Lawsuit threats flying -- BANNON-TRUMP relationship set aflame -- MERCERS kick Bannon to the curb -- THR running another Wolff excerpt today -- B'DAY: David Kihara

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Better Medicare Alliance

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

ATTN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES: OPM has announced a two-hour delayed arrival for today and the option for unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework. <http://bit.ly/2EUBdqE>

-- **A 4.5-MAGNITUDE** earthquake hit the Bay Area early this morning. It was centered in Berkeley. <http://bit.ly/2CErOpY>

Good Thursday morning. OVERHEARD YESTERDAY AFTERNOON ON THE SENATE FLOOR: Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) to Joe Biden, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell standing nearby: "Joe, Mitch needs your help! He wants you to negotiate!"

TRUMP VS. BANNON -- THIS IS WAR -- "Trump lawyer sends Bannon 'cease and desist' letter," by Andrew Restuccia: "President Donald Trump's lawyer sent former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon a 'cease and desist' letter on Wednesday, accusing him of violating an agreement signed during the 2016 campaign that prevented him from disclosing confidential information or disparaging Trump and his family.

"The letter comes after excerpts of a forthcoming book by journalist Michael Wolff revealed that Bannon criticized Trump's son, Donald Trump Jr., and son-in-law, Jared Kushner. According to the excerpts, Bannon referred to a 2016 meeting at Trump Tower with Russian operatives arranged by Trump's son Donald Trump Jr. and son-in-law Jared Kushner as 'treasonous' and 'unpatriotic.' The White House disavowed the book, and Trump bashed Bannon in a forceful statement earlier Wednesday.

"Mr. Trump and the Company hereby demand that you cease and desist from any and all further disclosure of Confidential Information, disparagement of Mr. Trump, his family members, his or their companies, and/or the Company, and communication with the media, including but not limited to Mr. Wolff and any and all other journalists, reports, authors and bloggers,' Trump's lawyer, Charles Harder, wrote in the letter."

<http://politi.co/2CE2Ab9>

-- **THIS IS CLASSIC** Trump retaliation. He and his organization have threatened lawsuits and sent similar letters to adversaries over the years. ... **AND BY THE WAY:** The White House can't argue simultaneously that the book is completely incorrect and Bannon violated a non-disclosure agreement. If he violated a non-disclosure agreement then something he said was right!

THE BACKSTORY -- ELIANA JOHNSON: "Bannon was shot on the South Lawn and run over by a tank": "The dramatic collapse on Wednesday of the shaky alliance between President Donald Trump and his former chief strategist, Steve Bannon, marked perhaps the most vicious falling out between a president and a former aide in modern history. But the fireworks capped months of tension between the two, who have repeatedly taken veiled shots at each other through the news media but never attacked each other on the national stage.

"On the way to Mar-a-Lago for Christmas, the president fumed about a report in Vanity Fair that quoted Bannon saying Trump had just a 30 percent chance of serving out a full term, but the president's aides persuaded him not to go public with his frustration, according to two sources familiar with the episode. ...

"The public meltdown convinced some who had worked closely with the Trump campaign that the president had effectively kneecapped his former adviser, who is considered an influential force on the populist right. 'Bannon was shot on the South Lawn and run over by a tank and the president shifted in gear and ran over him again,' said veteran Republican strategist Ed Rollins, a strategist for the pro-Trump Great America super PAC. 'I've never seen anybody blown up like he was.'"

<http://politi.co/2CQOEHW>

-- **WAP0'S JOSH DAWSEY and ASHLEY PARKER -- MERCER MOVES ON:** "Bannon has in recent weeks also alienated his main financial backer, Rebekah Mercer, after he told several other major conservative donors that he would be able to count on the Mercers' financial support should he run for president, a person familiar with the conversations said.

"The person said Mercer now does not plan to financially support Bannon's future projects - and that she was frustrated by his moves in Alabama and some of his comments in the news media that seemed to stoke unnecessary fights. A person close to Bannon said he was not running for president. Bannon and Mercer declined to comment through representatives." <http://wapo.st/2CTuInL>

-- **NYT'S PETER BAKER and MAGGIE HABERMAN:** "At the White House on Wednesday morning, aides who had kept a watchful eye on Mr. Bannon's efforts to make himself a kingmaker saw an opening to finally rid themselves of him. They encouraged the president to hit back publicly, and Mr. Trump went through at least three drafts of a statement with his communications director, Hope Hicks, and other aides before sending out a final version unlike any issued by a president against a top adviser in modern times. ...

"The book cites an email from an unnamed White House aide offering a harsh assessment of Mr. Trump's operation that was said to reflect the view of Gary D. Cohn, the president's national economics adviser: 'It's worse than you can imagine. An idiot surrounded by clowns. Trump won't read anything -- not one-page memos, not the brief policy papers; nothing. He gets up halfway through meetings with world leaders because he is bored.'" <http://nyti.ms/2CCMQoS>

ABOUT MICHAEL WOLFF ... Paul Farhi in the Post: "Among the many things he's been called - 'blunt,' 'pathetic,' 'calculating' - the one thing Michael Wolff has never been described as is boring.

"A provocateur and media polemicist, Wolff has a penchant for stirring up an argument and pushing the facts as far as they'll go, and sometimes further than they can tolerate, according to his critics. He has been accused of not just re-creating scenes in his books and columns, but of creating them wholesale. ...

"Wolff, for example, writes that Thomas Barrack Jr., a billionaire friend of Trump's, told a friend that Trump is 'not only crazy, he's stupid.' Barrack on Wednesday denied to a New York Times reporter that he ever said such a thing. Katie Walsh, a former White House adviser, has also disputed a comment attributed to her by Wolff, that dealing with Trump was 'like trying to figure out what a child wants.'" <http://wapo.st/2CR02TY>

FLASHBACK -- MICHELLE COTTLE on Aug. 30, 2004 in TNR, "Wolff Trapped": "Much to the annoyance of Wolff's critics, the scenes in his columns aren't recreated so much as created - springing from Wolff's imagination rather than from actual knowledge of events. Even Wolff acknowledges that conventional reporting isn't his bag. ... An editor who has worked with Wolff[:]' 'He is adroit at making the reader think that he has spent hours and days with his subject, when in fact he may have spent no time at all.'" <http://bit.ly/2Co7zsq>

***** **A message from Better Medicare Alliance: HEALTH CARE POLICY ALERT:**
We can all agree that high need, high cost patients deserve the best care. And with Medicare Advantage, seniors and people with disabilities are getting the high-value care they need through flexible benefits and specialized care. Learn more:
<http://bettermedicarealliance.org> *****

IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND ... This explanation of Wolff's reporting -- attached to the N.Y. Magazine excerpt -- is going to get a lot of attention: "[H]e conducted more than

200 interviews. In true Trumpian fashion, the administration's lack of experience and disdain for political norms made for a hodgepodge of journalistic challenges. Information would be provided off-the-record or on deep background, then casually put on the record. Sources would fail to set any parameters on the use of a conversation, or would provide accounts in confidence, only to subsequently share their views widely. And the president's own views, private as well as public, were constantly shared by others. The adaptation presented here offers a front-row view of Trump's presidency, from his improvised transition to his first months in the Oval Office." ***Read the entire how-it-happened statement*** <http://nym.ag/2CD4Yy3> ...

... **JOSH HOLMES (@holmesjosh)** -- Mitch McConnell's former top aide -- tweeted: "As a former press staffer, this description gives me cold chills."

ONE MORE THING ... -- "Trump disbands voter fraud commission: Kobach says Homeland Security immigration officials will take over probe," by Josh Gerstein and Matt Nussbaum: "President Donald Trump is dumping a controversial commission that was charged with investigating his unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud during the 2016 election, the White House said Wednesday. Trump asked the Department of Homeland Security to look into the issue instead." <http://politi.co/2qmJT64>

-- **@realDonaldTrump** at 6:02 a.m.: "Many mostly Democrat States refused to hand over data from the 2016 Election to the Commission On Voter Fraud. They fought hard that the Commission not see their records or methods because they know that many people are voting illegally. System is rigged, must go to Voter I.D." ... **at 6:11 a.m.:** "As Americans, you need identification, sometimes in a very strong and accurate form, for almost everything you do.....except when it comes to the most important thing, VOTING for the people that run your country. Push hard for Voter Identification!"

SEUNG MIN KIM (@seungminkim): "So, today. *deep breath*

- Jones sworn in, GOP majority narrows
- Trump-Bannon war explodes
- Manafort sues Mueller, Rosenstein
- Rosenstein pops up on Hill to meet with Ryan
- Big Four try to negotiate spending deal
- Voter fraud commission dissolved

I'm sure I missed something."

FROM 30,000 FEET -- "New year, new start? Not in President Trump's Washington," by AP's Julie Pace: "So much for a new year, new start. For Donald Trump, that energy-sapping 2017 cocktail of blistering presidential tweets, salacious White House infighting and jaw-dropping feuds with foreign adversaries has given way to, well, more of the same. 'We are off and running,' said Josh Holmes, a longtime adviser to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. 'It's amazing that the pace that we set in 2017 has continued with equal vigor.'" <http://bit.ly/2Cz4rxf>

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ... -- @JohnJHarwood: "Wolff book on how top aides regard

Trump: 'For Steve Mnuchin and Reince Priebus, he was an 'idiot.' For Gary Cohn, he was 'dumb as shit.' For H.R. McMaster he was a 'dope.' The list went on.'" ...

@alexburnsNYT: "A rout of a week so far for Breitbart-ism >> - WH drops the axe on Bannon - Romney on glide path to the Senate - Kobach commission disbanded - Doug Jones, not Roy Moore, sworn into Senate". ...

... **@KatyTurNBC:** "From Fire and Fury, here's Trump on his friends' wives -->"

<http://bit.ly/2E3Wmq> ... **@maggieNYT:** "Bannon/Wolff stuff (and that's whose office Wolff often went to when he visited WH) is basically same tactic Trump has used on people for years. Get in, get what you need, get out, use an associate's words again them." ... **@ZekeJMiller:** "FWIW: The several times I saw Wolff at the White House, he was cleared-in with a blue 'appointment' badge allowing West Wing access, rather than a gray 'press' badge." ...

... **@peterbakernyt:** "White House @PressSec says Trump never elevated Bannon to be equal to chief of staff. But Trump transition's statement announcing Bannon and Priebus appointments in Nov. 2016 said they would work 'as equal partners to transform the federal government.'" ...

... **@HallieJackson:** "Q's asked today: is the president engaging in authoritarian behavior? Did Donald Trump Jr. commit treason? Should Americans be concerned with the president's mental fitness? Is it dangerous for POTUS to taunt leaders on Twitter? Do Americans like him more when he's not tweeting?"

--**N.Y. POST** cover, "ET TU, BANNON?" <http://nyp.st/2qmONzR>

-- **ANOTHER WOLFF EXCERPT COMING TODAY!**, per CNN's Brian Stelter: "A second excerpt will come out on Thursday, and Wolff will be interviewed on NBC's 'Today' show on Friday. The book's publisher, Henry Holt & Company, was forced to adjust its rollout plan on Wednesday. But make no mistake: This was a good problem for Henry Holt to have. The national news coverage of the book's revelations -- including shocking quotes from Steve Bannon -- sent the book soaring on Amazon.com. By 3 p.m. ET, it was ranked #1 on the site's best-selling books list. Twenty-four hours earlier, it had been ranked #48,449." <http://cnmmon.ie/2ISNXFQ> ... **\$20.98 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2CQK2kW>

THEN THERE'S THIS -- "Washington's growing obsession: The 25th Amendment," by Annie Karni: "Lawmakers concerned about President Donald Trump's mental state summoned Yale University psychiatry professor Dr. Bandy X. Lee to Capitol Hill last month for two days of briefings about his recent behavior. In private meetings with more than a dozen members of Congress held on Dec. 5 and 6, Lee briefed lawmakers - all Democrats except for one Republican senator, who Lee declined to identify. Her professional warning to Capitol Hill: 'He's going to unravel, and we are seeing the signs.'

"In an interview, she pointed to Trump 'going back to conspiracy theories, denying things he has admitted before, his being drawn to violent videos.' Lee also warned, 'We

feel that the rush of tweeting is an indication of his falling apart under stress. Trump is going to get worse and will become uncontrollable with the pressures of the presidency." <http://politi.co/2E2jdcM>

WHAT PRESIDENT TRUMP WANTS TO BE TALKING ABOUT --

@realDonaldTrump at 9:13 p.m.: "MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!" ... **at 9:11 p.m.:** "Stock Market had another good day but, now that the Tax Cut Bill has passed, we have tremendous upward potential. Dow just short of 25,000, a number that few thought would be possible this soon into my administration. Also, unemployment went down to 4.1%. Only getting better!"

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN WATCH -- "Congress and White House inch forward in budget talks," by Sarah Ferris, Heather Caygle, and Seung Min Kim: "Congressional leaders emerged from closed-door talks with Trump administration officials Wednesday claiming progress toward a budget deal but without any breakthroughs to announce -- with less than three weeks to go before another government funding deadline. At issue are fierce debates over federal spending levels as well as immigration and border security. ...

"Following the confab, Republicans from the House, Senate and White House issued a joint statement that highlighted their support for higher defense spending and criticized any effort by Democrats to insist on including protections for young undocumented immigrants in a budget deal. 'It is important that we achieve a two-year agreement that funds our troops and provides for our national security and other critical functions of the Federal government,' they said. 'It also remains important that members of Congress do not hold funding for our troops hostage for immigration policy.'

"Democrats refrained from deriding their counterparts after the meeting. Pelosi told reporters upon exiting the talks that it is her 'hope' the negotiations are making progress. ... A Democratic aide said in addition to spending and a deal to help Dreamers, leaders agreed to keep negotiating on a health care package and a disaster aid bill. In a private call with House Democratic leaders after the meeting, Pelosi called the 'Big Four' huddle a 'process meeting,' according to a source on the call. She stressed that Democrats are eager for a deal to avert a government shutdown." <http://politi.co/2E5blHJ>

DOJ WATCH -- "Deputy AG, FBI director make unannounced visit to Paul Ryan's office," by Kyle Cheney: "Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and FBI Director Chris Wray made an unannounced visit to Speaker Paul Ryan's office Wednesday as the Justice Department grapples with an increasingly hostile faction of House Republicans demanding documents related to the bureau's Russia probe.

"Rosenstein was spotted entering Ryan's office, and a spokesman for the speaker confirmed that Rosenstein and Wray had requested the meeting. A second person familiar with the meeting said it was related to a document request issued over the summer by House intelligence committee chairman Devin Nunes.

"Nunes (R-Calif) has mounted an aggressive push -- with the threat of contempt citations for members of the FBI and Justice Department -- to glean more information about how the FBI handled a disputed dossier alleging illicit ties between President Donald Trump and the Kremlin." <http://politi.co/2Cm7wgN>

WHAT MANAFORT IS UP TO -- "Paul Manafort files lawsuit against Justice Department, Mueller," by Darren Samuelsohn and Josh Gerstein: "Attorneys for former Donald Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort filed a lawsuit Wednesday in federal court accusing special counsel Robert Mueller and the Justice Department of overreaching with criminal charges brought last fall that included money laundering and tax evasion. Manafort, who has pleaded not guilty to the multi-count indictment, urged the court to strike down Mueller's appointment as illegal. The 17-page complaint argues that the Russia special counsel exceeded authority DOJ gave him in May to investigate any links or coordination between the Russian government and the Trump campaign - and that DOJ granted Mueller too much power in the first place by giving him the green light to go after 'any matters that arose or may arise directly from the investigation.'

"If the court won't strike down his appointment, Manafort's lawsuit suggests several other options, including setting aside Mueller's indictments, declaring that he doesn't have the authority to investigate business dealings that aren't part of his original mandate, stopping him from investigating matters beyond the scope of the original appointment, or 'any other relief as may be just and proper.'" <http://politi.co/2CD9oFP>

-- CNN'S LAURA JARRETT (@LauraAJarrett): "Response from DOJ spokesperson: 'The lawsuit is frivolous but the defendant is entitled to file whatever he wants.'"

QUITE THE LEAD -- MARK LANDLER on **A1** of the **NYT**: "While the two Koreas were gingerly reopening a border hotline, President Trump was gleefully taunting Kim Jong-un about the relative size of their nuclear launch buttons. That, in a nutshell, captured the challenge facing the Trump administration as South Korea embarked on fragile new talks with North Korea on Wednesday." <http://nyti.ms/2CyF0vJ>

ANOTHER CBS STAFFER OUT -- "CBS News fires political director amid allegations of 'inappropriate behavior'," by CNN's Brian Stelter: "CBS News said Wednesday that it has fired its political director, Steve Chaggari, amid allegations of 'inappropriate behavior' in his past. Chaggari was a longtime CBS News employee. In his latest role Chaggari, among other things, oversaw coverage of the Trump administration and occasionally appeared on CBS programs.

"Chaggari could not be reached for comment on Wednesday. His Twitter account was deleted sometime in the past two days. The decision to dismiss Chaggari came six weeks after CBS fired Charlie Rose, the co-host of its morning show, after the Washington Post published detailed allegations of sexual misconduct by Rose." <http://cnnmon.ie/2IRBdQG>

-- "Rep. Blake Farenthold has not yet paid back \$84K for settlement," by CNN's

Sunlen Serfaty, Juana Summers and Deirdre Walsh: "Disgraced Rep. Blake Farenthold has not yet repaid \$84,000 in taxpayer money for a settlement reached with a former aide who accused him of sexual harassment and other improper conduct, despite the Texas Republican's statement late last year saying he would do so. Nearly one month after the initial statement, Farenthold's communications director, Stacey Daniels, tells CNN that he has not yet written a check, and on the advice of counsel is waiting to see what changes the House will make to the Congressional Accountability Act before repaying those funds.

"On December 4, Farenthold told a local TV station, KRIS in Corpus Christi, Texas, 'I'm ... going to hand a check over this week to probably Speaker Ryan or somebody and say, 'Look, here's the amount of my settlement. Give it back to the taxpayers. I want to be clear that I didn't do anything wrong, but I also don't want the taxpayers to be on the hook for this.'" But that check is on hold." <http://cnn.it/2CooDye>

TRUMP'S THURSDAY -- The president is meeting with GOP senators to discuss immigration and will have a separate meeting with Republican senators to talk about 2018 legislative priorities. He will later present NSA veteran Richard Ledgett Jr. with the National Security Medal (<http://politi.co/2Aoz3vY>). He is also slated to meet with RNC Chair Ronna Romney McDaniel.

-- **SENATORS** discussing 2018 priorities with Trump: Sens. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), Cory Gardner (R-Colo.), John Hoeven (R-N.D.), Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) and John Thune (R-S.D.).

COMING ATTRACTIONS - "Trump plans to attend Georgia-Alabama football championship game," by Atlanta Journal-Constitution's Greg Bluestein: "President Donald Trump is planning to attend the national college football championship game between Georgia and Alabama on Monday in Atlanta, according to three people with direct knowledge of his plans. He is set to attend the game with Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and Nick Ayers, a Georgia native who is Vice President Mike Pence's chief of staff. First Lady Melania Trump is also expected to attend the game, which will be held at Mercedes-Benz Stadium under stepped-up security." <http://bit.ly/2qhhDBM>

IN CASE YOU WANT TO REACH ANYONE IN THE WHITE HOUSE ... --

@maggieNYT: "As of next week, West Wing staffers have been told they can't use personal cell phones anymore per multiple aides. They were told this early in the term but it's now being enforced, with security concerns being cited."

THE JUICE ...

-- **MSNBC PRESIDENT PHIL GRIFFIN** will announce today that **Colleen King** will be the executive producer of "The 11th Hour," Brian Williams' show, and **Tina Urbanski** will be co-executive producer of "Hardball." ***The full memo, which NBCers will get this morning*** <http://politi.co/2CmC2am>

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: ERIN BILLINGS** is joining Global Strategy Group as a senior vice president. She most recently was a principal at the Podesta Group.

-- **THE AMERICAN ACTION NETWORK** is opening offices in 11 new districts. One interesting location: Washington State's fifth congressional district, which is represented by Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, a member of House Republican leadership.

<http://bit.ly/2E64YUv>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Vice President Mike Pence and former Vice President Joe Biden chat following the ceremonial swear-in of Sen. Doug Jones (D-Ala.) on Jan 3. | John Shinkle/POLITICO

MICHAEL CROWLEY -- "Trump shatters decades-old nuclear taboo": "President Ronald Reagan was warming up for a national radio address on Aug. 11, 1984, when an open microphone caught him joking about nuclear war. 'My fellow Americans, I am pleased to tell you today that I've signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever,' Reagan quipped. 'We begin bombing in five minutes.' The international outcry that followed -- newspapers condemned Reagan, and some Soviet forces were reportedly placed on alert -- underscored one of the first rules of the American presidency: Don't speak lightly about nuclear war.

"To President Donald Trump's critics, that is one of many norms he has recklessly shattered, most recently with a tweet on Monday in which Trump declared that his 'nuclear button' was 'much bigger [and] more powerful' than the one North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Un, claimed in a recent speech to have on his desk. Democrats and foreign policy experts fiercely denounced Trump's rhetoric as alarming and dangerous."

<http://politi.co/2ETFNWc>

DAN DIAMOND talks with **FDA COMMISSIONER STEVE GOTTLIEB** about his 2018 priorities in the latest Pulse Check podcast: <http://bit.ly/2Anz3wq>

******* A message from Better Medicare Alliance: CONGRESS HAS UNFINISHED BUSINESS TO PROTECT MEDICARE ADVANTAGE SENIORS:** 19 million seniors and people with disabilities choose Medicare Advantage for one reason: it gives them the flexible, affordable, and robust health care they need. And with health needs in this country becoming more complex, it's clear that innovative, integrated solutions are required.

Better Medicare Alliance urges Congress to act quickly to enhance care for Medicare beneficiaries by approving the CHRONIC Care Act providing enhanced flexibility in supplemental benefit designs for high-cost, high-need beneficiaries and permanently

reauthorization of Special Needs Plans (SNPs). And, Congress should vote to delay the Health Insurance Tax (HIT) to protect Medicare Advantage beneficiaries from unaffordable premium hikes.

Enrollment in Medicare Advantage and consumer satisfaction is growing. There is more evidence that Medicare Advantage is improving outcomes and leading efforts to implement innovations in delivery of care. Learn more: <http://bettermedicarealliance.org>

MEDIAWATCH - "Peter Thiel Is Exploring The Creation Of A Conservative Cable News Network," by BuzzFeed's Ryan Mac and Steven Perlberg: "Billionaire venture capitalist Peter Thiel wants to create a new conservative cable news network and his representatives have engaged the powerful Mercer family to help with funding, according to two sources familiar with the situation. Thiel, a Facebook board member who secretly funded lawsuits to bring down Gawker Media, had originally explored a plan to create the network along with Roger Ailes, the late founder of Fox News, according to a soon-to-be published book by journalist Michael Wolff. But BuzzFeed News has learned that Thiel has continued looking into fashioning a Fox News competitor even after the May 2017 death of Ailes, according to the two sources familiar with the matter. ...

"The plan, according to Wolff, was that Thiel ... would pay for the network. Ailes would come along and bring loyal Fox News talent Sean Hannity and Bill O'Reilly, who was forced out at Fox last year following reports about settlements he had reached with multiple women. But two days before the meeting, Ailes fell and hit his head. Ailes told his wife, Elizabeth, not to reschedule the meeting before he slipped into a coma, Wolff writes. He died a week later." <http://bzfd.it/2COHKCJ>

-- **"Gallup ends daily presidential approval tracking poll,"** by Steve Shepard: "Gallup is discontinuing its daily tracking poll of presidential approval, the storied pollster announced Wednesday in the latest cutback of the company's public survey operations.

"Political reporters and observers have long been accustomed to visiting Gallup's website every day shortly after 1 p.m. Eastern Time for the latest update in the president's approval rating. But rather than report public opinion of President Donald Trump's job performance on a daily basis, Gallup will now offer a weekly approval rating.

"The reason for the change? Gallup had been tracking a presidential approval question onto polls it was conducting for the Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index since 2008 - a continuous, privately sponsored health survey. But that poll is now transitioning from phone to mail surveys, which don't enable reporting of daily results."

<http://politi.co/2CQUUPP>

Playbookers

SPOTTED yesterday at a welcome event for Sen. Doug Jones (D-Ala.) in the Kennedy Caucus Room: James Carville, former Attorney General Eric Holder, and Birmingham, Mayor Randall Woodfin. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2CQCo9X> ... <http://bit.ly/2Am0neC> ... <http://bit.ly/2Ao0HJy> ... James Carville and Bradley Beychok at the Palm Wednesday evening.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Rob Gifford, managing editor at CBSN, is 39. **A fun fact about Rob:** "I played multiple sports when I was younger, and in my former life, I was a member of 2 NCAA Division I lacrosse championship teams at Princeton during the program's heyday in the late 90s and early 2000s. Just don't call me a lax bro." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2CQrVvm>

BIRTHDAYS: Ben Mayer, executive producer of MSNBC's "Kasie DC," is 34 ... Alex Campau of the White House Domestic Policy Council ... Indiana GOP Chairman Kyle Hupfer ... Jeremy Funk, former comms. director of Americans United for Change, is 39 ... Doris Kearns Goodwin is 75 ... James Warren, chief media writer for the Poynter Institute, and contributing editor for N.Y. Daily News ... Politico's David Kihara, who edits Playbook every weekday morning ... Politico's Caitlin Emma and Adriel Bettelheim ... Deborah Matteliano ... Joshua Zeitz, whose new book "Building the Great Society: Inside LBJ's White House" comes out on Jan. 30 ... Andy Borowitz is 6-0 (hat tip: Jewish Insider) ... Samantha Slosberg, assistant manager of external affairs at the Toy Association and an HFA alum ... Sarah Andrews ... Don Shula is 88 ... Hillary Brandenburg ... Holly Kinser ... Myanmar (Burma) is 7-0 on its Independence Day ... Hoyer alum Terry Lierman ... Nan Aron, founder and president of Alliance for Justice ... Audrey Hickenlooper ... Jim Friedman is 71 ... Courtney Piron, VP of federal gov't affairs at AbbVie ...

... **Marc Brumer**, VP at the Herald Group, celebrating by training for two hours on his road bike trainer for the upcoming spring bike racing season ... Chip Kahn, CEO and president of the Federation of American Hospitals ... Barbara Menard ... David Muir, British political consultant ... Qianwei Zhang of Hong Kong-based PR firm SPRG Beijing ... Peter Schorsch ... Doug Centilli ... Jen Flaherty ... Michele Remillard, executive producer of C-SPAN's "Washington Journal" ... Anthony Terrell ... WJLA's Brian van de Graaff and his son Tony ... Madeleine Daly ... Patrick Connolly, associate at Portfolio Advisors ... Joe Hansen ... Belen Mendoza ... Lorraine Driscoll ... Jennifer Sullivan ... Patrick Purtill ... Adam Goldman, principal and founder of Windmill Consulting, is 46 ... OFA alum Claire Zucker ... Ronnie Stangler ... David Phelps ... Anthony Terrell ... Jeff Angevine ... Erin Moffet ... Lisa Pittman ... Doug Campbell ... Tiana McCall ... Amanda Septimo ... Joe McAndrew ... Anne Louise Simmons ... Joe Wineke ... Sara Throener ... Kevin Ronnie ... Thad Nation (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

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Advantage to offer innovative, modern health care to seniors and those with disabilities eligible for Medicare. <http://bettermedicarealliance.org> *****

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Sent: Tue 5/30/2017 2:05:43 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Shift: DOL listening session on fiduciary — Jobs day — Are wages rising too fast?

By Marianne LeVine | 05/30/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Ted Hesson, Bianca Padró Ocasio, Patrick Temple-West, and Timothy Noah

TODAY: DOL LISTENING SESSION ON FIDUCIARY: The Labor Department will hold a closed-door listening session today about the Obama administration's fiduciary rule, reports POLITICO's Patrick Temple-West. The rule requires that broker dealers consider only their client's best interest when providing retirement advice, irrespective of commissions and fees. DOL officials will meet with lobbyists representing the Financial Services Roundtable, the Investment Company Institute, the Securities and Financial Markets Association, and the American Bankers Association. Consumer groups and other supporters of the rule won't be present; they'll be invited to a second listening session.

Today's meeting will likely be tense because Acosta announced last week that he would not delay further the rule's June 9 effective date. (Originally the rule was set to take effect on April 10, but DOL delayed that in response to a White House memorandum directing the agency to review the rule.) In a Wall Street Journal op-ed, Acosta said his hands were tied. "We have carefully considered the record in this case," he wrote, "and the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act, and have found no principled legal basis to change the June 9 date." Acosta did, though, pledge to solicit public comment, presumably in anticipation of possibly altering the rule at some later date. Got any more information about the meeting? Let us know.

GOOD MORNING. It's Tuesday, May 30 and this is Morning Shift, POLITICO's daily tipsheet on employment and immigration policy. Send tips, exclusives, and suggestions to thesson@politico.com, mlevine@politico.com, mleonor@politico.com, ikullgren@politico.com and tnoah@politico.com. Follow us on Twitter at [@tedhesson](https://twitter.com/tedhesson), [@marianne_levine](https://twitter.com/marianne_levine), [@melleonor](https://twitter.com/melleonor), [@IanKullgren](https://twitter.com/IanKullgren), and [@TimothyNoah1](https://twitter.com/TimothyNoah1).

THIS WEEK: JOBS DAY: The Labor Department will release its May jobs report Friday. The agency reported earlier this month that the economy added 211,000 jobs in April and that unemployment fell to 4.4 percent. Analysts expect a similar report for May. A Bloomberg survey of economists predicts that the economy will have added 185,000 jobs and that unemployment will remain 4.4 percent. A strong report will all but guarantee that the Federal Reserve will hike interest rates at its June meeting.

Job growth has been strong in 2017, but gross domestic product growth has been weak. The Commerce Department reported Friday that GDP grew 1.2 percent in the first quarter of 2017, up from an initial estimate of 0.7 percent. That's below the average growth rate of 2.1 percent since the recession ended in 2009. GDP growth is expected to pick back up in the second and third quarter, according to the Wall Street Journal's Ben Leubsdorf.

ARE WAGES RISING TOO FAST?: The consensus among economists is that wage growth - in April, 2.5 percent over 2016 - remains weak given the tightness of the labor market. But what if the consensus is wrong? Neil Irwin argues in the New York Times that wages may actually be rising *too fast*.

"Consider a simple model for how much the average worker's pay ought to be rising: You could simply add together the productivity growth rate - how rapidly the output generated by each hour of labor is increasing - and the inflation rate, which tells us how quickly prices are rising. Over the last 24 months through March, inflation has come in at 1.4 percent a year, and productivity growth at 0.6 percent. Those are very low numbers ... You may expect average worker wages to have risen only 2 percent. In fact, the average hourly earnings for nonmanagerial private sector workers rose 2.4 percent a year in that period ... The real mystery, then, isn't why wages are rising so slowly, but why they're rising so fast." More [here](#).

NEW DOL CHIEF OF STAFF: Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta named Wayne Palmer, who led the Trump transition's beachhead team, chief of staff on Friday. Previously he was senior manager for congressional relations at the Center for Presidential Transition and, before that, chief of staff to Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) and legislative director to Sen. George Voinovich (R-Ohio).

SESSIONS TAPS MCHENRY: Attorney General Jeff Sessions on Friday named Judge James McHenry acting director for the Executive Office for Immigration Review. McHenry, who first joined the EOIR in 2003, returned to the immigration agency in 2016 after working as an administrative law judge for the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review and the Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer. "His experience will serve the department well," Sessions said, "as EOIR works to reduce the immigration court backlog and to ensure that the law is applied in a fair and efficient manner." Morning Shift previously reported that EOIR director Juan Osuna and deputy director Ana Kocur, both Obama appointees, resigned their positions in an email circulated to staff.

COHN'S COAL GAFFE FESTERS: Gary Cohn, director of the National Economic Council, [roamed spectacularly off-message](#) Thursday when he told reporters aboard Air Force One that "coal doesn't ... make that much sense as a feedstock." Candidate Donald Trump, you may recall, won West Virginia and Ohio in part by pledging to revive the coal industry after Hillary Clinton [blurted out](#) at a CNN Town Hall in Columbus that "We're going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business." Trump [replied](#): "Their jobs have been taken away, and we're going to bring them back, folks." Trump billed the election as the "last shot for the miners."

Cohn's remark would seem to suggest that the Trump administration *won't* bring coal back, because nothing can, an opinion most energy experts agree with. But it isn't exactly what the Trump base wants to hear. "Gary Cohn Relaunches War on Coal," [blared](#) Breitbart, and [nicknamed](#) Cohn "[Wormtongue](#)" for good measure. Myron Ebell, who ran Trump's transition at the Environmental Protection Agency, [emailed](#) Axios's Jonathan Swan: "NEC Chairman Gary Cohn does not represent the people who voted for Donald J. Trump." Writing in the New York Times, liberal columnist Paul Krugman [wondered](#) whether Cohn shared his views about coal

with the president, though not whether there was the remotest chance Trump would be receptive. "Trump cares a lot more about public adulation," Krugman wrote, "than he does about serious policy advice."

ILLINOIS LAWMAKERS CHANGE WORKERS COMP: The Illinois State Senate passed a bill Friday to modify the state's rules for workers' compensation. According to the Associated Press' John O'Connor, "majority Democrats endorsed one proposal that would require companies writing workers' compensation insurance to get state approval for the rates they charge, and another that creates a non-profit company - with government oversight - to write competitive policies." Although Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner called for workers' comp reform, Republican state lawmakers say that the changes don't go far enough. "Republicans want arbitrators who determine awards to solely consider American Medical Association guidelines addressing 'impairment.' Currently, an arbitrator may consider a worker's age, occupation, future earning capacity and other factors. Using only AMA, Democratic Senate President John Cullerton of Chicago says, a bus driver and a concert pianist who both lose a finger would get the same award." More [here](#).

NLRB ROUNDUP:

TOMORROW: NLRB ADMINISTRATIVE TRIAL BEGINS IN MENARDS CASE: A National Labor Relations Board administrative law judge will hold a hearing Wednesday in a case against Menards Inc., a home improvement company headquartered in Eau Claire, Wisc. Last year, the Office and Professional Employees International Union filed a complaint arguing that Menards misclassified its drivers as independent contractors. In addition, OPEIU argued that a mandatory arbitration clause in the Menards' employee handbook was illegal. The hearing will begin at 9 a.m. at the Federal Office Building, NLRB Hearing Room, 212 3rd Ave S Ste 200, in Minneapolis.

APPEALS COURT UPHOLDS ALTERNATIVE ENTERTAINMENT DECISION: The Sixth Circuit declined Friday to revive an NLRB case against Alternative Entertainment Inc, a DISH network sales and service provider. The NLRB ruled that AEI violated federal labor law by requiring employees to resolve all disputes "exclusively through binding arbitration"; by prohibiting an employee from discussing proposed changes to his compensation with his colleagues; and by firing that employee after he protested the changes. The appeals court agreed, and granted the board's request to enforce its order. In the court opinion, Judge Karen Nelson Moore wrote "that an arbitration provision requiring employees covered by the NLRA individually to arbitrate all employment-related claims is not enforceable." In addition, Moore determined that there was sufficient evidence to support the NLRB's finding that the employee "was fired for engaging in protected, concerted activity." Read the opinion [here](#).

IMMIGRATION IN VIRGINIA GOV RACE: The Virginia governor's race is being colored by President Donald Trump's anti-immigration policies, reports Alan Suderman of the Associated Press. "The contest is potential preview of the 2018 midterms," Suderman writes, "and the growing influence of immigrant voters - particularly in voter rich Northern Virginia - mirror similar changes in other parts of the country that will hold elections next year."

Democrats Ralph Northam (currently lieutenant governor) and Tom Perriello (former member of Congress) would allow undocumented immigrants to apply for a driver's license. Meanwhile, the leading Republican candidate, Ed Gillespie (lobbyist, former chairman of the Republican National Committee, former counselor to President George W. Bush), "is walking a tightrope," writes Suderman. Where once Gillespie pressed for a more inclusive GOP, now he says he'll be "very strong" on immigration enforcement, "promising greater cooperation between Virginia law enforcement officials and federal immigration officers. He's also promised to undo state policy that allows children of people living in the country illegally to pay in-state tuition at public universities." More [here](#).

TEXAS HOUSE GETS ROWDY: "Texas lawmakers accused each other of assault and threatening each other's lives on Monday during a tense final day of the legislative session as hundreds of protesters opposing Texas' tough new anti-'sanctuary cities' law launched a raucous protest from the public gallery in the Texas House," the Associated Press reports. "Demonstrators wearing red T-shirts reading 'Lucha,' or 'fight' in Spanish, quietly filled hundreds of gallery seats as proceedings began. After about 40 minutes, they began to cheer, drowning out the lawmakers below," the AP reports.

Protesters swarmed the state Capitol in Austin to protest SB4, an immigration enforcement bill signed into law earlier this month. The measure allows authorities to inquire about immigration status during routine encounters with law enforcement. "Because of the protests, the Texas House leadership stopped the Memorial Day session and asked state troopers to clear the gallery," the AP reports. "The demonstration continued for about 20 minutes as officers led people out of the chamber peacefully in small groups. There were no reports of arrests."

In response to the protests, state Rep. Matt Rinaldi, a Republican, said he called U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "Rinaldi, of Irving in suburban Dallas, and [Democratic Rep. Cesar Blanco of El Paso] were then seen shouting at each other," the AP reports. "A scuffle nearly ensued before other lawmakers separated the two." Read more [here](#) and watch a video of the incident [here](#).

IOWA MEATPACKING TOWN SUPPORTED BY IMMIGRANTS: In a meatpacking town in Iowa that was once predominantly white, immigrants now dominate the labor force, Patricia Cohen reports in the New York Times. "Fierce global competition, agricultural automation, and plant closures have left many rural towns struggling for survival," Cohen writes. "In areas stripped of the farm and union jobs that paid middle-class wages and tempted the next generation to stay put and raise a family, young people are more likely to move on to college or urban centers like Des Moines ... Yet Storm Lake, hustled along by the relentless drive of manufacturers to cut labor costs and by the town's grit to survive, is still growing. However clumsily at times, this four-square-mile patch has absorbed successive waves of immigrants and refugees - from Asia, from Mexico and Central America, and from Africa. They fill most of the grueling, low-paid jobs at the pork, egg and turkey plants; they spend money at local shops, and open restaurants and grocery stores; they fill church pews and home-team benches. While more than 88 percent of the state's population is non-Hispanic white, less than half of Storm Lake's is." More [here](#).

COFFEE BREAK:

- "In China, umbrellas and basketballs join the sharing economy," from [The New York Times](#)
- "Minnesota resorts scrambling for summer help have extra hurdle," from [the Minnesota Star Tribune](#)
- "Retirement details elusive in Trump's budget," from [Pensions & Investments](#)
- "Why are so many women dropping out of the labor force?" from the [Los Angeles Times](#)

THAT'S ALL FOR MORNING SHIFT.

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-shift/2017/05/30/dol-listening-session-on-fiduciary-220561>

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To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 10/10/2017 11:50:20 AM
Subject: Re: Definers

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

> On Oct 4, 2017, at 2:23 PM, Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov> wrote:

>

> I am sitting with the contracts team right now to finalize what needs to be done

>

> Thx ng

>

> Sent from my iPhone

>

>> On Oct 4, 2017, at 2:20 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

>>

>> What is the status on this? Ryan just asked for us to pull tv clips and we still don't have Definers who can provide this service to us.

>>

>> Let's get this done!

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Fri 7/21/2017 7:34:14 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Top firms see second-quarter bump despite gridlocked Congress — Akin Gump, Brownstein Hyatt top revenue rankings — Top spenders — Top contracts

By Theodoric Meyer | 07/21/2017 03:32 PM EDT

With David Beavers and Aubree Eliza Weaver

Here are your second-quarter Lobbying Disclosure Act revenue rankings:

TOP FIRMS

1. **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld:** \$9.7 million (versus \$9.4 million in Q1 2017 and \$9.7 million in Q2 2016)
2. **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck:** \$6.9 million (versus \$6.7 million in Q1 2017 and \$6.7 million in Q2 2016)
3. **Squire Patton Boggs:** \$6.2 million (versus \$5.8 million in Q1 2017 and \$4.6 million in Q2 2016)
4. **BGR Group:** \$5.7 million (versus \$5 million in Q1 2017 and \$4.5 million in Q2 2016)
5. **Holland & Knight:** \$5.4 million (versus \$5.1 million in Q1 2017 and \$5 million in Q2 2016)
6. **Podesta Group:** \$5.2 million (versus \$5.5 million in Q1 2017 and \$5.9 million in Q2 2016)
7. **Van Scoyoc Associates:** \$4.9 million (versus \$4 million in Q1 2017 and \$5.7 million in Q2 2016)
8. **Covington & Burling:** \$4.8 million (versus \$4.2 million in Q1 2017 and \$3.3 million in Q2 2016)
9. **Cornerstone Government Affairs:** \$4.8 million (versus \$4.5 million in Q1 2017 and \$4.2 million in Q2 2016)
10. **Capitol Counsel:** \$4.6 million (versus \$4.2 million in Q1 2017 and \$4.1 million in Q2 2016)
11. **K&L Gates:** \$4.6 million (versus \$4.3 million in Q1 2017 and \$4.4 million in Q2 2016)
12. **Williams & Jensen:** \$4.4 million (versus \$3.9 million in Q1 2017 and \$4.3 million in Q2 2016)
13. **Mehlman Castagnetti:** \$3.8 million (versus \$3.6 million in Q1 2017 and \$3.3 million in Q2 2016)
14. **Ernst & Young:** \$3.7 million* (versus \$3.4 million in Q1 2017 and \$3.3 million in Q2 2016)
15. **Peck Madigan Jones:** \$3.6 million* (versus \$3.3 million in Q1 2017 and \$3.4 million in Q2 2016)
16. **Capitol Tax Partners:** \$3.5 million (versus \$3.3 million in Q1 2017 and \$3.2 million in Q2 2016)
17. **Cassidy & Associates:** \$3.5 million (versus \$3.4 million in Q1 2017 and \$3.3 million in Q2 2016)

18. **American Continental Group:** \$3.3 million* (tie) (versus \$2.4 million in Q1 2017 and \$1.8 million in Q2 2016)
19. **Fierce Government Relations:** \$3.3 million (tie) (versus \$3.2 million in Q1 2017 and \$3.3 million in Q2 2016.)
20. **Crossroads Strategies:** \$2.9 million (versus \$2.7 million in Q1 2017 and \$2 million in Q2 2016)

Figures have been verified with the firms except for those marked with asterisks, which are estimated based on Senate disclosure filings.

TOP SPENDERS

1. **U.S. Chamber of Commerce:** \$11.7 million
2. **National Association of Realtors:** \$10.9 million
3. **Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America:** \$6 million
4. **Google:** \$5.9 million
5. **American Medical Association:** \$5.3 million
6. **National Retail Federation:** \$5 million
7. **Boeing:** \$4.8 million
8. **AT&T:** \$4.2 million
9. **Lockheed Martin:** \$3.9 million
10. **American Hospital Association:** \$3.8 million
11. **Comcast:** \$3.8 million
12. **Amgen:** \$3.6 million
13. **National Association of Broadcasters:** \$3.4 million
14. **U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform:** \$3.3 million
15. **Amazon:** \$3.2 million
16. **The Business Roundtable:** \$3.2 million
17. **NCTA:** \$3.1 million
18. **Southern Company:** \$3.1 million
19. **American Bankers Association:** \$3 million
20. **Open Society Policy Center:** \$2.9 million

BIGGEST CONTRACTS:

1. **Covington & Burling:** Qualcomm (\$880,000)
2. **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld:** Gila River Indian Community (\$640,000)
3. **McGuireWoods Consulting:** Victims of Terrorism - East Africa (\$600,000)
4. **McGuinness & Yager:** HR Policy Association (\$590,000) (tie)
5. **Monument Policy Group:** Victims of Terrorism - East Africa (\$590,000) (tie)
6. **Morris J. Amitay:** Victims of Terrorism - East Africa (\$590,000) (tie)
7. **Covington & Burling:** Coalition for American Retirement (\$490,000)
8. **Covington & Burling:** Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (\$430,000)
9. **PricewaterhouseCoopers:** TRGroup (Alliance for Competitive Taxation) (\$400,000)
10. **Venn Strategies:** Employee-Owned S-Corporations of America (\$390,000)

OTHER FIRMS OF NOTE:

- **Avenue Strategies:** \$450,000 (versus \$180,000 in Q1 2017)
- **Ballard Partners:** \$2.3 million (versus \$1.3 million in Q1 2017)
- **Forbes Tate:** \$2.6 million (versus \$2.9 million in Q1 2017 and \$2.3 million in Q2 2016)
- **King & Spalding:** \$997,500 (versus \$985,000 in Q1 2017 and \$977,500 in Q2 2016)
- **Ogilvy Government Relations:** \$2.9 million (versus \$2.9 million in Q1 2017 and \$2.6 million in Q2 2016)
- **Subject Matter:** \$2.1 million (versus \$2.1 million in Q1 2017 and \$2.5 million in Q2 2016)
- **Thorn Run Partners:** \$2.4 million (versus \$2.3 million in Q1 2017 and \$2.2 million in Q2 2016)
- **Venable:** \$2.2 million (versus \$2.2 million in Q1 2017 and \$2.8 million in Q2 2016)

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Got a tip? **Get in touch:** tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow me on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN: Congress hasn't moved major legislation in the first six months of **Donald Trump's** presidency, but that isn't holding K Street back. Most of the top lobbying firms saw modest bumps in business in the second quarter. **Akin Gump**, the top firm once again, brought in \$9.7 million in the second quarter, up from \$9.4 million in the first quarter. **Brownstein Hyatt**, the No. 2 firm, saw \$6.9 million in revenue, up from \$6.7 million in the first quarter. Congress may be stalled on the health care bill, but "we are still doing a lot of work on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue," said **Elizabeth Gore**, the chairwoman of Brownstein Hyatt's government relations practice. That includes regulatory work in the agencies and executive orders coming out of the White House.

- Some firms have seen more significant leaps in business. **BGR Group**, a top Republican-leaning firm, did \$5.7 million in business in the second quarter compared to \$5 million in the first quarter and \$4.5 million in the second quarter of 2016. **American Continental Group**, where **Dave Urban**, who helped Trump carry Pennsylvania, is a top lobbyist, brought in \$3.3 million in the second quarter, up from \$2.4 million in the first quarter and \$1.8 million in the second quarter of 2016. **Podesta Group**, on the other hand, which was seen as close to President Barack Obama's administration, saw its revenue decline to \$5.2 million in the second quarter compared to \$5.5 million in the first quarter and \$5.9 million in the second quarter of 2016. **David Marin**, a principal at Podesta, said any declining in lobbying revenue was made up for by an increase in the firm's communications work. "We're much more than a quote-unquote lobbying firm," Marin said. "We're a strategic communications firm."

- Lobbyists are bullish that the rest of the year will see their business pick up even more. **Darrell Conner** of **K&L Gates** said he expects the months after the August recess to be busy. Whether lobbying revenue hits the heady highs of 2009 "will really be dependent on whether Congress and the administration can come together on the big issues: tax reform, infrastructure, those kinds of things," he said.

FILINGS THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE TODAY: **Uber** has hired **Ballard Partners**, the

Florida firm run by **Brian Ballard**, a top fundraiser for **Donald Trump's** campaign. Ballard has raked in business since opening a Washington office after Trump's win, with \$2.3 million in domestic lobbying revenue this quarter and another \$660,000 in foreign revenue reported to the Justice Department, according to the firm. Uber also retains **Capitol Tax Partners**, the **Federal Hill Group**, **Invariant** and the **Doerr Group**. **Capitol Counsel**, meanwhile, has landed **AdvaMed** as a client, and **McGuireWoods Consulting** will lobby for **Hewlett-Packard**, **Intel** and **TripAdvisor**.

NEW PARTNERS AT SMOOT TEWES: **Smoot Tewes Group** is promoting **Dan Kanninen**, **Shoren Brown** and **Aaron Wells** to partner, joining **Julianna Smoot** and **Paul Tewes**. Kanninen, who had worked for the firm before, rejoined late last year after advising **Hillary Clinton's** campaign in North Carolina. Brown and Wells have been with the firm for three years. STG is also promoting **Sabrina Neal** to chief financial officer. **More recent staff moves are outlined [here](#).**

CHAMBER PRODS CONGRESS ON TAX REFORM: The **U.S. Chamber of Commerce**, sent a letter to Congress on Thursday urging members to get on with tax reform. "We are a quarter of the way through this Congress, but we are not yet where we need to be on key issues like health care, tax reform, and rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure," **Tom Donohue**, the Chamber's president and chief executive, wrote in the letter. "Promises were made; promises must be kept. At this point Congress must more fully turn its attention to and accelerate its effort to enact tax reform, which will grow the economy and create jobs." While Donohue doesn't explicitly tell members to give up on health care, he writes the "gridlock" on repealing Obamacare "is holding back progress" on tax reform. **Here's the [full letter](#).**

CAMPBELL LEAVES GROCERY MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION OVER GMO STANCE: "**Campbell Soup Co.** will leave the **Grocery Manufacturers Association** by the end of the year, Chief Executive **Denise Morrison** said Wednesday during a company investor event," **POLITICO's Luis Sanchez** reports. "The departure comes after Campbell last year publicly broke from GMA and other major food producers by supporting mandatory GMO labeling." **[Full story](#).**

JOBS REPORT

- **United Airlines** has tapped **Terri Fariello** as its next senior vice president of government affairs. She was previously vice president in **ExxonMobil's** Washington office. **Julian Ha** of **Heidrick & Struggles** handled the search. For those keeping track, **Delta Air Lines** is still hunting for a new top lobbyist.

- "**Spotify** is bringing on longtime Washington policy hand **Emery Simon** to be its first-ever global head of government relations, according to two industry sources," **POLITICO's Nancy Scola** [reports](#). "Simon will start at Spotify in August, reporting to the company's general counsel, and will also oversee the Brussels office, according to the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the hire publicly."

- **Danielle Suber** has joined **Emerson** as manager of government relations. She was previously a

policy adviser to Rep. **Jason Chaffetz** (R-Utah), who resigned from Congress on June 30.

- **Orbital ATK** is adding **Suzy Sterner** to its Washington office as senior director and chief lobbyist for civil space programs. She was previously a lobbyist for **Science Applications International Corporation**.

SPOTTED: At a fundraising dinner for Sen. **Marco Rubio** (R-Fla.) on Tuesday night at RPM in Mount Vernon Square that brought in \$100,000, according to a PI tipster: Sen. **Richard Burr** (R-N.C.), who was a special guest; **Joe Wall** of **Goldman Sachs**; **Geoff Verhoff** of **Akin Gump**; **Carmen Spence** of the **Managed Funds Association**; **John Lively** of **AT&T**; **Scott Weaver** of **Wiley Rein**; **Jaime Hjort** of **CTIA**; **Robbie Aiken** of **Pinnacle West**; **Chris Chapel** of **NextEra Energy**; **Chris Berardini** of **Quicken Loans**; **Bill Behrens** of **General Electric**; **Jack Livingston** of **Raytheon**; **Nicole Gustafson** of the **National Association of Broadcasters**; **Kristin Bodenstedt** of **Bacardi**; **Guy Beeman** of **Marathon**; and **Joe Musker** of **Centene**.

- At a **Hispanic Leadership Fund** reception at Bobby Van's on Wednesday night welcoming **Gus Portela** to the staff, according to a PI tipster: **Mario Lopez** of the **Hispanic Leadership Fund**; **Andrew Kovalcin** of **Advanced Advocacy**; **Jared Parks** of the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce's** Global Intellectual Property Center; former New Hampshire state Rep. **Marilinda Garcia**; **Tony Lis** of Rep. **Jack Bergman's** office; **Jacquelyn Puente** of **Comcast**; **Matthew Kandrach** of **Consumer Action for a Strong Economy**; and **Alexandra Smith** of **America Rising**.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

Kennedy Club Committee (Sen. John Kennedy, Pelican PAC, NRSC)

NEW PACs:

America First Era (PAC)
John Cats Political Action Committee (Unknown)
Valent U.S.A. LLC Political Action Committee (PAC)
World Muhajir Congress PAC (PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

A1.9 Strategies LLC: FLIR Systems, Inc.
American Continental Group: Heckler & Koch Defense Inc.
Ballard Partners: AVE, LLC
Ballard Partners: Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Ballard Partners: Uber Technologies, Inc.
Becker & Poliakoff, P.A.: City of North Miami
Becker & Poliakoff, P.A.: The Latino Coalition
Capitol Counsel, LLC: Advanced Medical Technology Association (AdvaMed)
Commonwealth Care Alliance: Commonwealth Care Alliance
Continental Consulting Group Corporation: Hoffman Engineering

Crowell & Moring LLP: Medtronic, Inc.
District Economics Group: Employee-Owned S-Corporations of America
District Economics Group: Hartford Financial Services Group
Greenberg Traurig, LLP: Barrick Gold of North America, Inc.
Health Policy Source, Inc.: Blank Rome Government Relations LLC on behalf of ArcticDX
Hogan Lovells US LLP: Commercial Drone Alliance
Husch Blackwell, LLP: Cybernet Systems Corporation
Jack Ferguson Associates, Inc.: Arizona Minerals Inc.
Jefferson Business Consulting, LLC: Alana HealthCare, LLC
Kent Caperton Consulting: Rackspace Hosting
Kent Caperton Consulting: Texas Central Partners
Mayer Brown LLP: Weldbend Corporation
McGuireWoods Consulting (A Subsidiary of McGuireWoods LLP): Digital Content Next
McGuireWoods Consulting (A Subsidiary of McGuireWoods LLP): Fresh Air Educators, Inc.
McGuireWoods Consulting (A Subsidiary of McGuireWoods LLP): Hewlett Packard Enterprise
McGuireWoods Consulting (A Subsidiary of McGuireWoods LLP): Infosys Limited
McGuireWoods Consulting (A Subsidiary of McGuireWoods LLP): Intel Corporation
McGuireWoods Consulting (A Subsidiary of McGuireWoods LLP): Small UAV Coalition
McGuireWoods Consulting (A Subsidiary of McGuireWoods LLP): TripAdvisor Inc.
Merchant McIntyre & Associates, LLC: Averett University
Merchant McIntyre & Associates, LLC: City of Pompano Beach, Florida
Merchant McIntyre & Associates, LLC: East Central Indiana Regional Planning District
Merchant McIntyre & Associates, LLC: Town of Windsor, California
Merchant McIntyre & Associates, LLC: Trinity Baptist College
Mr. Gaylord Hughey: Fish & Richardson P. C.
Mr. Gaylord Hughey: Martin Operating Partnership, LP
Ms. Renee Rappaport: Association of Military Banks of America
Playmaker Strategies, LLC: Rio Valley Biofuels
RR&G, LLC: Walter Raheb Consulting
S-3 Group: The Internet Association Sabiston Consultants, LLC: Pilot Catastrophe Services, Inc.
Sextons Creek: Singh World Foundation
Signal Group Consulting, LLC: Kitty Hawk Corporation
Strategies 360: North Pacific Paper Company (NORPAC)
The Russell Group, Inc.: Michigan Sugar Company
Timothy Lovain: Crossroads Strategies LLC obo Washington State Department of Transportation
Timothy Lovain: Crossroads Strategies, LLC on behalf of City of Edmonds
Timothy Lovain: Crossroads Strategies, LLC on behalf of Intoxalock
Timothy Lovain: Crossroads Strategies, LLC on behalf of Port of Everett
Washington Advocacy Group: DCI Group
Washington Advocacy Group: Pafford EMS
Washington Advocacy Group: Rural AR Telecom
Washington Alliance Group: nLight
Washington Alliance Group: Synapse Technology Corporation

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

A1.9 Strategies LLC: O'Brien, Gentry & Scott obo Prox Dynamics, a division of FLIR Systems
Akerman LLP: International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Amazon Prime Air
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Digital Content Next
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Foundation Medicine, Inc.
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Fresh Air Educators, Inc.
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Infosys Limited
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Intel Corporation
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: MAXIMUS Inc.
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Small UAV Coalition
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: TripAdvisor Inc.
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Macular Degeneration Association
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: PrecisionHawk USA, Inc.
Alpine Group, Inc.: National Association Clean Water Agencies
Alpine Group, Inc.: SAP America, Inc
Alston & Bird LLP: Air Methods Corporation
Alston & Bird LLP: American Health Care Association
Alston & Bird LLP: Fresenius Medical Care
Alston & Bird LLP: Health South Corporation
Alston & Bird LLP: Humacyte, Inc.
Alston & Bird LLP: Kidney Care Council
Alston & Bird LLP: Matrix Medical Network
Alston & Bird LLP: National Cardiovascular Partners
Alston & Bird LLP: OTP Consortium
Alston & Bird LLP: Partnership for Quality Home Healthcare
Alston & Bird LLP: SCAN Health Plan
Alston & Bird LLP: Verax Biomedical
Alston & Bird LLP: Crown Laboratories, Inc.
Alston & Bird LLP: Mohawk Industries, Inc.
Alston & Bird LLP: Rheem Manufacturing Company
Alston & Bird LLP: United Health Services - Pruitt Corporation
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists: American Society of Consultant Pharmacists
Arent Fox LLP: Greater New York Hospital Association
Ariale Strategies, L.L.C.: Becker & Poliakoff on behalf of ShotSpotter
Ariale Strategies, L.L.C.: Turbocombustor Technology, Inc. d/b/a Paradigm Precision
Armitage Consulting, LLC: Spectrum Public Affairs (on behalf of U.S. Coalition for Advanced Diesel Cars)
Ballard Partners: Veterans Evaluation Services, Inc
Banner Public Affairs, LLC: CKE Restaurants, Inc.
Best Best & Krieger LLP: City Of Laredo Texas
BGR Government Affairs: Families Against Mandatory Minimums
BGR Government Affairs: Roivant Sciences, Inc.
BGR Government Affairs: American Career College
BGR Government Affairs: National Air Traffic Controllers Association
Blank Rome Government Relations: Blank Rome LLP

Blank Rome Government Relations: Chambers Conlon and Hartwell (Municipality Of Anchorage/Port Of Anchorage)

Blank Rome Government Relations: Agfa HealthCare Corporation

Blank Rome Government Relations: Furie Operating Alaska

Bret Healy d/b/a Riverbluff Strategies: Ho-Chunk, Inc.

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP: Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP: CH2M Hill Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP: Genomind

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP: Ingram Micro Inc.

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP: Intertek Testing Services NA, Inc.

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP: Val d'Or

Capitol Counsel, LLC: BI Incorporated

Capitol Hill Consulting Group: National Funeral Directors Association

Capitol Hill Consulting Group: Orbital ATK Inc Fka: Alliant Techsystems Operations LLC

CGCN Group, LLC (formerly known as Clark Geduldig Cranford & Nielsen, LLC): Aetna, Inc.

CGCN Group, LLC (formerly known as Clark Geduldig Cranford & Nielsen, LLC): Coalition for Patient Vision Care Safety

CGCN Group, LLC (formerly known as Clark Geduldig Cranford & Nielsen, LLC): Intersections, Inc.

CGCN Group, LLC (formerly known as Clark Geduldig Cranford & Nielsen, LLC): Lundback, Inc.

CGCN Group, LLC (formerly known as Clark Geduldig Cranford & Nielsen, LLC): ATG Americas Trading Group S.A.

Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell, LLC: Kansas Department Of Commerce

Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell, LLC: Omnitrax Inc

Champlin Washington Strategies: National Foreign Trade Council

Chicago Bridge & Iron Company N.V.: Chicago Bridge & Iron Company N V

Coffield Law PC: Canadian Sugar Institute

Complete Pharma Holdings LLC (CP) (Formerly: Marathon Pharmaceuticals, LLC): Complete Pharma Holdings LLC (CP) (Formerly: Marathon Pharmaceuticals LLC)

Congressional Strategies LLC: Innovative Federal Strategies, LLC

Cove Strategies: Motion Picture Association of America, Inc.

Covington & Burling LLP: Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc

Covington & Burling LLP: Illumina, Inc.

Crawford & Mauro Law Firm: Humane Society of the United States

Crossroads Strategies, LLC: Birdon America, Inc.

Crossroads Strategies, LLC: Brunswick Commercial and Government Products

Crossroads Strategies, LLC: iNSYS Therapeutics, Inc.

Crossroads Strategies, LLC: United Catcher Boats

Crossroads Strategies, LLC: Valero Energy Corporation

Crowell & Moring LLP: North Cypress Medical Center

Cypress Advocacy, LLC: Americans Standing for Simplification of the Estate Tax, Inc. (ASSET)

Cypress Advocacy, LLC: Edison Electric Institute

Dan Burton International LLC: ECM BioFilms, Inc., a corporation, also d/b/a Enviroplastics International

David Scott Partners, LLC: Duane Morris Government Strategies
 DC Strategies Group, LLC: Ocean Dreams Holdings, LLC
 Dentons US LLP: RAI Services Company
 Dentons US LLP: Amerisourcebergen
 Dentons US LLP: Lone Star Rail
 Dentons US LLP: Pacific Seafood
 Dentons US LLP: The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
 Dilworth Paxson LLP: FedBid, Inc.
 Dilworth Paxson LLP: Bancroft
 DLA Piper LLP (US): Modern Markets Initiative
 DLA Piper LLP (US): CAN Capital, Inc.
 DLA Piper LLP (US): Oracle Corporation
 Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP: Broadcast Music Inc
 Epplin Strategic Planning: Civitas Public Affairs Group
 Epplin Strategic Planning: Van Heuvelen Strategies on behalf of Citizens for Responsible
 Ernst & Young LLP (Washington Council Ernst & Young): CenturyLink, Inc.
 Farragut Partners LLP: AmerisourceBergen Corporation
 Fennemore Craig: American Share Insurance
 Fierce Government Relations: Option Care
 Fierce Government Relations: Project for Opportunity and Safety, Inc.
 Flynn & Associates, Inc.: American Chemistry Council, Inc.
 Foley & Lardner LLP: National Concrete Masonry Association
 Foley & Lardner LLP: Center for Oral Health
 FTI Government Affairs: MasterCard International Incorporated
 Galileo Consulting Group, Inc.: Clover Health, LLC
 Gavel Resources, LLC: Salishan - Mohegan, LLC.
 Genzyme Corporation: Genzyme Corporation
 Goldbug Strategies LLC: Cure Forward
 Harry Holmes: Good Neighbor Healthcare Center
 Harry Holmes: Harris County Healthcare Alliance
 Health Policy Source, Inc.: Johnston Group on behalf of Skagit Valley Hospital
 Henley Strategies LLC: Coalition for Responsible Business Finance
 Highground Inc: Ballard Spahr, LLP on behalf of Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association
 Innovative Federal Strategies, LLC: Trident Systems Incorporated
 Innovative Federal Strategies, LLC: City Of Redlands, Ca
 J M Burkman & Associates: Conidia Inc
 J M Burkman & Associates: ECM Holdings
 J M Burkman & Associates: Elysium
 J M Burkman & Associates: Rayblue Solutions
 J M Burkman & Associates: Schluter Systems LP
 J.A.Hill Group, LLC: COMPTel dba INCOMPAS
 John T. Doolittle, LLC: Dan Burton Int. LLC on behalf of ECM BioFilms, Inc., dba
 Enviroplastics Int
 John T. Doolittle, LLC: Dan Burton International, LLC
 John T. Doolittle, LLC: The Greenbriar Project Owner, LP
 Keller McIntyre & Associates: Benedictine College

Keller McIntyre & Associates: CentraCare Health
 Keller McIntyre & Associates: Hiwassee College
 Keller McIntyre & Associates: Lexington-Fayette Urban County
 Keller McIntyre & Associates: Williamsport Municipal Water Authority Williamsport Sanitation Authority
 Lewis-Burke Associates, LLC: University of Iowa
 Lincoln Policy Group: NextEra Energy
 Lindbergh Counsel LLC: Red River Waste Solutions
 Mayer Brown LLP: Pershing Square Capital Management, L.P.
 Mayer Brown LLP: Viamedia, Inc.
 ML Strategies, LLC: CompTIA Certifications, LLC
 ML Strategies, LLC: Exxon Mobil Corp
 ML Strategies, LLC: Lockheed Martin Corporation
 ML Strategies, LLC: The Northeast MAGLEV, LLC
 ML Strategies, LLC: Alterna Capital Partners, LLC
 Ms. Barbara Rohde: White Earth Tribal Nation
 MSLGROUP Americas, Inc., d/b/a Qorvis MSLGROUP: Yamal LNG
 MWW Group: WebMD Health
 National Stripper Well Association: National Stripper Well Association
 Nixon Peabody LLP: Bond Dealers of America
 NMS Strategies: Innovative Federal Strategies
 Nossaman LLP (Formerly Nossaman LLP/O'Connor & Hannan): Institute For Marine Mammal Studies
 Nossaman LLP (Formerly Nossaman LLP/O'Connor & Hannan): Marine Conservation Alliance
 Nossaman LLP (Formerly Nossaman LLP/O'Connor & Hannan): Southeast Regional Dive Fisheries Association
 Nyprocoa, Inc.: Matrix Realty, Inc.
 O'Brien, Gentry & Scott, LLC: Automotive Management Services
 O'Brien, Gentry & Scott, LLC: Prox Dynamics As (Subsidiary Of Flir Systems)
 Oldaker Law Group, LLP: Coqui Radiopharmaceuticals, Corp.
 O'Rourke & Nappi, LLP: National Marine Manufacturers Association
 Park Strategies, LLC: CliniComp International, Inc.
 Peck Madigan Jones: American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
 Peck Madigan Jones: Anti-Defamation League
 Podesta Group, Inc.: Delaware State University Foundation (on behalf of Council of 1890 Universities)
 Podesta Group, Inc.: ZTE USA, Inc.
 Podesta Group, Inc.: Leadership Conference On Civil Rights
 Porterfield, Fettig & Sears, LLC: Comenity
 Rampy Northrup LLC: Alkermes, Inc.
 Roberti Global (fka Roberti White, LLC): Podesta Group, Inc. (on behalf of Hitomi Financial Ltd.)
 Roberti Global (fka Roberti White, LLC): The Philadelphia Orchestra
 Roberti Global (fka Roberti White, LLC): USA Living
 Rubicon Advisors, LLC: Alliance to Prevent the Abuse of Medicines
 Rubicon Advisors, LLC: College of American Pathologists

Runyan Public Affairs, LLC: Envelope Manufacturers Association
 Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg, P.A.: Borderfree
 Sellery Associates: American Society For Quality
 Signal Group Consulting, LLC: Afognak Native Corporation
 Signal Group Consulting, LLC: International Fragrance Association North America
 Signal Group Consulting, LLC: Specialized Training Consulting & Instruction
 Signal Group Consulting, LLC: Border Trade Alliance
 Signal Group Consulting, LLC: City and County of Denver Colorado
 Sonoran Policy Group, LLC: EventTracker
 Sonoran Policy Group, LLC: The Vinyl Institute
 Split Rock Strategies: Lindbergh Counsel LLC
 Steptoe & Johnson LLP: American Fuel Cell and Coated Fabric Company
 Steptoe & Johnson LLP: Blend Labs, Inc.
 Steptoe & Johnson LLP: Navigators Global LLC on behalf of Proctor Financial Inc.
 Subject Matter (fka Elmendorf Ryan): Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence
 Sullivan & Cromwell LLP: Canada Pension Plan Investment Board
 The Conafay Group, L.L.C.: Alnylam Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
 The OB-C Group. LLC: Centrus Energy -- Formerly Know As United States Enrichment Corporation
 The OB-C Group. LLC: Orion Engineered Carbons, LLC
 The Raben Group: AIDS United
 The Raben Group: PACE Center for Girls
 The Raben Group: The DoCanto Group (on behalf of The Nurse Family Partnership)
 The Summerill Group LLC: Dallas County Sheriff's Office
 The Summerill Group LLC: Lackawanna County Prison
 The Summerill Group LLC: St. Charles County Department of Corrections
 Thompson Coburn LLP: KM LPTV of Chicago-13, LLC
 Todd Strategy, LLC: Arbor Pharmaceuticals, LLC
 Tonio Burgos & Associates of New Jersey LLC: City of Ocean City New Jersey
 Tonio Burgos & Associates, Inc.: AHRC New York City
 Tonio Burgos & Associates, Inc.: Univision Communications, Inc.
 Troutman Sanders Public Affairs Group, LLC: American Peanut Shellers Association
 Troutman Sanders Public Affairs Group, LLC: Dr. Ying Yue
 Troutman Sanders Public Affairs Group, LLC: Fonterra Co-Operative Group Limited
 Troutman Sanders Public Affairs Group, LLC: Georgia Farm Services, LLC
 Troutman Sanders Public Affairs Group, LLC: Jean Francois Coste
 Troutman Sanders Public Affairs Group, LLC: Knapp Chevrolet, LLC
 Troutman Sanders Public Affairs Group, LLC: Marathon Petroleum Corp.
 Troutman Sanders, LLP: Motivation, Inc.
 University Of Pittsburgh: University Of Pittsburgh
 US Policy Strategies: Akin, Gump, et.al on behalf of Hospitals for Accountability thru Judicial Review
 Van Heuvelen Strategies, LLC: Citizens for Responsible Energy Solutions
 Van Scoyoc Associates: CSX Corporation
 Van Scoyoc Associates: Memphis-Shelby County Airport Authority
 Van Scoyoc Associates: Rural County Representatives of California

VeriSign, Inc.: VeriSign, Inc.

Vulcan Inc.: Vulcan Inc.

Walsh Capitol Consulting LLC: Oriana House

Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP: San Luis Rey River Indian Water Authority

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Wed 10/18/2017 8:24:08 PM
Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

We are just finishing the statement of work with the contracting office and then they have to advertise it for 5 days to justify "sole sourcing" this to Definers, due to the high \$ value of the contract, to make sure another vendor doesn't say they can do the same thing.

Thx ng

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 18, 2017, at 4:13 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Guys we've been working on this since June. I don't know if the problem is with Definers or EPA but let's get this done, asap. No more delays.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 6:27 PM
To: Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

Great. Adding Nancy and Liz.

On Sep 28, 2017, at 4:11 PM, Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com> wrote:

We're fully registered...

<Screen Shot 2017-09-28 at 4.23.59 PM.png>

On Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 3:29 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy
<Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

HI –

Working with contracts on this – here is the remaining issue that the contracting officer brought to me yesterday --

Specifically, the vendor is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). In order for any vendor to receive a contract from the federal government, they must be registered in this system. The vendor seems to be reluctant to register.

George had been working with the vendor on this. I have a call into the vendor as they may need assistance in completing the forms.

Will update you as soon as I hear from the vendor.

Thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:02 PM
To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers -- Clips
Importance: High

Where are we on this and when can we get this going? Today is a day where we could really use their help capturing clips in real time. This is very important and our wait and the process to do this has been way too long. Thank you!

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definercorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Biesecker, Michael
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:02:01 PM
Subject: FW: Julie and Michael -

Definers says its contract with EPA has been canceled. Do you wish to update Jahan's statement from yesterday?

"Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 5:10 PM
To: Biesecker, Michael <MBiesecker@ap.org>; Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Adding Julie Pace, again. We have answered your questions with the following on-the-record statements.

"A similar security sweep was done for EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

"Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA's Protective Service Detail." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

"Please ask your source, who apparently has access to the database of EPA's expenditures." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 5:05 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Also confirming that you decline to comment on the specific questions in yellow below ...

From: Biesecker, Michael
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:27 PM
To: 'Wilcox, Jahan' <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Jahan,

Again, we are willing to include the details of the similar spending under Lisa Jackson, but we don't have immediate access to EPA's records. Please provide the details of the spending to which you refer. Otherwise, we will be left to say we couldn't immediately verify the charge you claim. Could you at least provide the date, amount and contractor so we can try to check it out?

Also, just to clarify, is it your on-the-record contention that Pruitt in no way requested the bug sweep, but that this was an independent decision made solely by the EPA Protective Service Detail? Can you say concretely whether the administrator was even aware of the decision?

Thanks,

Michael

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:16 PM
To: Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>; Biesecker, Michael <MBiesecker@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Julie and Michael – below are the answers in bold.

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:05 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Jahan,

Could you please clarify how electronic surveillance would potentially imperil Administrator Pruitt's physical security?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA’s Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Also, we have not seen and, depending on the amount, don't have access to what was spent on a bug sweep under Lisa Jackson, but I'm interested in reporting that out. Can you provide the documentation on that, including the date, amount and the name of the vendor?

“Please ask your source, who apparently has access to the database of EPA’s expenditures.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>; Biesecker, Michael <MBiesecker@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Julie and Michael -

Below are our on-the-record responses in bold that you can attribute to me.

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 11:47 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Bug sweeping, biometric locks

Liz, Jahan,

AP will be publishing a story about \$3,000 in taxpayer funds expended in April for a contractor to sweep Administrator Pruitt’s office for electronic listening devices. We will also be reporting on spending to install biometric locks in his suite.

When coupled with the previously reported purchase of the privacy booth, it raises questions about why Pruitt feels the need to invest in counter-surveillance measures that none of his predecessors felt were necessary. EPA headquarters is a secure building with armed security and metal detectors at the entrances. Pruitt also has his personal security detail. Is the administrator concerned about the potential for electronic spying against him by the agency's own employees?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA’s Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

As part of the same story, we will also be mentioning the \$120,000 Definers contract and the FOIAs filed by America Rising targeted at EPA employees viewed as potentially disloyal to the Trump administration. Please provide any comment you have on those issues.

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael

AP

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“There are only two forces that can carry light to all corners of the globe – the sun in the heavens and The Associated Press down here.” -- – Mark Twain, 1906

“I go with Custer and will be at the death.” – AP reporter Mark Kellogg’s final dispatch from the Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1876

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Fri 11/10/2017 10:43:39 AM
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by ExxonMobil: Top energy highlights in Senate's tax overhaul — Hawks arrive in Bonn to reassure uneasy world of U.S. climate action — Perry headlining Texas event for Pro-Trump group

By Anthony Adragna | 11/10/2017 05:41 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff, Alex Guillén, Adam Behsudi, Esther Whieldon and Ben Lefebvre

AT LAST MY TAX IS COMPLETE AGAIN! Senate tax writers waited until 9 p.m. Thursday to roll out their tax bill, and here's what jumped out to ME's bleary-eyes:

— **The big stuff everyone gets:** The Senate bill, like the House bill, cuts the corporate tax rate to 20 percent, something pretty much all the energy companies will like. And the bill provides a temporary ability to use 100 percent expensing of capital, a boon to capital-intensive energy industries like oil, natural gas, coal mining, and even renewables, though solar companies have an interaction between the Investment Tax Credit and expensing that may cause unpleasant side-effects.

— **Oil gets a change to treatment of foreign income:** ME noticed that oil comes up several times in the tax bill, but the one that jumped out was the oil industry got a \$4 billion boost from a change to the treatment of refining and pipeline operations overseas in the Senate bill, the same as it got in the House bill. An industry source told ME earlier in the week that the change actually has little impact on bottom lines, since it mostly changes in what tax year foreign subsidiaries transfer money up to parent companies. The source was baffled as to why the Joint Committee on Taxation gave it a score in the House version, and will no doubt still be baffled at the score in the Senate version.

— **Utilities keep their exception to the interest deduction changes.** The Senate bill cuts the amount of interest businesses can deduct, but utilities, who favor the provision much more than 100 percent expensing, get a carveout.

— **No home for the orphans:** Senate tax writers opted not to deal with a slew of expired energy tax credits that found homes in the House bill. Nothing for fuel cells, small wind, microturbines, or even the nuclear tax credit extension. And there appeared to be nothing related to a carbon capture and sequestration credit pushed by a bipartisan group.

— **Then again, windies can becalmed:** The senators also did not include the changes the House made to Production Tax Credit. Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley has said the House bill didn't need to make its changes, since the PTC was already going to phase out under a 2015 agreement. "The Senate tax reform bill keeps a promise to America's more than 100,000 wind energy workers and restores the confidence of businesses pouring billions of dollars into rural America," Tom Kiernan, CEO of the American Wind Energy Association, said in a statement.

— **Charged up for EVs:** The Senate did not follow the House lead on electric vehicles, either.

While the House wiped out a \$7,500 tax credit, the Senate bill is silent.

Environmental groups are already trashing the effort. "The GOP is once again trying to redirect taxpayer money to the super-rich and super-polluting fossil fuel industry — and they expect us to pay for it by giving up our healthcare, our safety, and our children's future," Janet Redman, U.S. policy director for Oil Change International, said in one typical statement.

Bigger picture: There are massive differences between the House and Senate versions of the tax overhaul that signal hard bargaining lies ahead, POLITICO's tax gurus Aaron Lorenzo, Brian Faler and Bernie Becker [report](#). Their take: "Reconciling the House and Senate plans and getting sign-off from Trump is likely to be daunting." Score of the Senate proposal [here](#).

IT'S THE END OF THE WEEK AS WE KNOW IT! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and the Renewable Fuels Association's Rachel Gantz was first to pick Rep. Candice Miller as the congresswoman turned public works commissioner. Your end-of-the-week puzzler: Which powerful governing body out West has two former members of Congress among its five slots? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

CLIMATE HAWKS LAND IN BONN: Five Democratic senators — [Ben Cardin](#), [Ed Markey](#), [Sheldon Whitehouse](#), [Brian Schatz](#) and [Jeff Merkley](#) — are on the ground at the Bonn climate talks this weekend and will hold a call today at 12:30 p.m. to discuss their goals. But their message is clear: "We're not all nuts," Whitehouse told ME.

Still in it to win it: On Saturday, California Gov. Jerry Brown and former NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg will unveil America's Pledge with a report detailing the scope of the actions planned by non-federal entities to fight climate change. Joining them to reiterate U.S. commitment to aggressive climate action: Cardin, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa, COP23 President and Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama and Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto, among others.

Big spenders: The World Resources Institute announced Thursday a private cash infusion of \$2.1 billion in private funds to help restore degraded lands in Latin America and the Caribbean. "With more than \$2 billion of investments earmarked for Latin America alone, restoration is a climate solution that works and is a great investment," Walter Vergara, coordinator of the new push, said in a statement. More information [here](#).

**** Presented by ExxonMobil:** We're collaborating with FuelCell Energy on a novel idea to use fuel cells to capture carbon at natural gas power plants, and in the process reduce emissions and increase electrical output. This technology could be a game changer in addressing the world's growing need for energy, while also reducing the impact on the environment. [Learn more.](#) **

WHEN HE'S NOT WRITING OP-EDS: Energy Secretary Rick Perry, back from a trip to Paris this week, will headline a "roundtable discussion" in Houston on Monday afternoon on behalf of America First Policies, the pro-Trump political nonprofit, Campaign Pro's Maggie Severns [reports](#). America First has been quiet much of the year but is now pushing to give a jolt

to its fundraising and reassert its close ties to President Donald Trump. But Texas businessman Roy Bailey, who has deep ties to group, said Perry won't be there looking to raise funds. "It's a nice opportunity for people to understand what's going on at the Energy Department," Bailey said.

Remember: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has generated controversy and several investigations over his habit of mixing political activities with official government business.

CORNSTATERS NOT ALL SOLD ON WHITE: Kathleen Harnett White, Trump's pick to chair the Council on Environmental Quality, will need the support of all the Midwesterners on the Senate Environment committee if she's going to advance, and it looks like she still has some work to do on that front. Despite disavowing her previously staunch opposition to the Renewable Fuel Standard thanks to "new data" from Sen. Joni Ernst, White doesn't yet have Ernst's backing. "We're still debating that one," Ernst told ME. Veteran ME readers know the Iowa Republican extracted concessions from EPA on the RFS before backing new agency air chief Bill Wehrum.

Nebraska's Deb Fischer is also "still debating" White's nomination, and she is still looking for more information on how White would do her job. The CEQ chair doesn't have a regulatory role on RFS, but she would offer advice to Trump. "If you look at the questioning I had, I was looking at also how she would present options to the president," Fischer told ME. "That's going to be her job, not necessarily on the RFS, but where she gets her data from, how she prepares that and what kind of facts she has. We'll see how it shakes out."

Rounds a tentative yes: Mike Rounds of South Dakota said he's not totally on board, but, "I would lean yes as opposed to no." He thought she answered his questions well. "What I wanted to make sure people understood is that the RFS in its current form is the minimum we can do," he said.

PRUITT ADDRESSES ANTI-CLIMATE ACTION CONFERENCE: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt delivered a two-minute video address to a conference in Houston sponsored by the Heartland Institute, the group that opposes action to fight climate change. "I want to say to you at the Heartland Institute, thanks for what you're doing to advance energy, thanks for what you're doing to advance natural resources," Pruitt said. "There's great optimism across the country and I pray you feel that in Houston, Texas."

PAUSED FURTHER: A federal appeals court once again ordered lawsuits over the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan held in abeyance for another 60 days, until Jan. 8, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. The D.C. Circuit ordered EPA to file status updates on its CPP repeal effort every 30 days.

BLUNT MESSAGE FOR BARRASSO: Whitehouse told ME he understands why Pruitt might not want to testify before the Senate EPW committee but that Chairman John Barrasso should not let him off. "There's a point where oversight becomes a responsibility irrespective of your loyalties," he said. "I think there will be really awkward questions for him and I think the farther he stays away from a forum where he has to tell the truth, the happier he is."

DOURSON REALLY IN TROUBLE? If a vote came up today, ranking member [Tom Carper](#) told reporters, Michael Dourson, Trump's pick to run EPA's chemicals office, wouldn't have the necessary votes. "Privately, in my conversations with a number of Republicans, they have expressed deep concerns," he said. "We're going to make sure at the end of the day that he does not have the votes." And North Carolina's [Thom Tillis](#) confirmed Wednesday he's not yet ready to back Dourson: "We've heard the concerns and we're working on getting the background information."

ZINKE SAYS HE'S READY TO MEET WITH DURBIN: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said in a [letter](#) Thursday said he would be "happy to meet ... to discuss any issue" involving the agency with Senate Minority Whip [Dick Durbin](#) who has put the confirmation of multiple Interior nominees on hold until he gets a meeting with the secretary to discuss his review of several dozen national monument designations. Zinke pointed out that he talked with a number of Democrats prior to sending the report to the White House in late August and also with Sen. [Tom Udall](#) in mid-September on the New Mexico Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande Del Norte monuments. In a [tweet](#) Thursday, Zinke said he'd be "happy to talk monuments and nominees. Call anytime, Dick."

MORE INFORMATION SOUGHT ON PERRY'S PLAN: Four environmental groups — the Sierra Club, Earthjustice, the Environmental Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council — filed FOIA requests with [Energy](#) and [FERC](#) seeking information on the development of Energy Secretary Rick Perry's grid resiliency proposal to FERC. "It's outrageous that there is so little transparency at DOE that we have to repeatedly file these Freedom of Information Act requests instead of Rick Perry simply allowing the public and energy stakeholders to inform the policy making process," the Sierra Club's Mary Anne Hitt said in a statement.

HERE'S SOMETHING: The compromise version of the National Defense Authorization Act would require the Pentagon to rank the top 10 installations in each military branch's that are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change over the next two decades, Pro Defense's Connor O'Brien [reports](#). Conservatives sought to take out the provision during House floor debate earlier this year, but Democrats and moderate Republicans teamed up to leave it in.

ZINKE DENIES IMPROPRIETY IN WHITEFISH DEALINGS: During an interview with Fox News late Thursday, Zinke denied playing any role in his son landing a job with controversial Whitefish Energy — "he got a job by himself" — and said he had no role in the Montana-based company getting a now-cancelled contract to repair Puerto Rico's electric grid. "I didn't have any influence, didn't have any knowledge of the contract. Puerto Rico is not under Interior. And those elitists that would think from being a small town somehow is a crime, shame on ya," he said.

MAIL CALL! CONSERVATIVES ENDORSE 'BIGGER' MONUMENT REVIEW: Twenty-four House Republicans sent a [letter](#) to Trump Thursday urging him to "think big and act bigger" as he mulls final recommendations about what to do to a host of prior national monument designations. It recommends the outright rescission of several monuments and significant downsizing of others. "We ask that you take these recommendations to heart and that

you not be deterred by a few vocal special-interests groups from finishing what you set out to accomplish with this review," they wrote.

Democrats to GAO: Expand adviser probe: Ten members of the Senate Democratic caucus, led by Whitehouse, asked GAO in a Thursday [letter](#) to expand its existing probe into EPA scientific advisory appointments to evaluate Pruitt's new order barring scientists who receive grants from serving on advisory boards. "When a policy, like this one, does not on its face address the problem it purports to solve it should get exacting scrutiny to determine what in fact its true purpose is," they wrote.

How about that coal memo? Frustrated by the lack of response from the White House and EPA, Whitehouse [demanded](#) Murray Energy head Bob Murray turn over a copy of the three-page "action plan" he gave to the administration. The document became a [major focus](#) of Andrew Wheeler's nomination hearing to be EPA deputy administrator on Wednesday.

Think of us: The Petroleum Marketers Association of America sent a letter to Barrasso on Thursday asking him to urge the Trump administration "to reduce the ethanol mandate given that the [underground storage tank] system compatibility issues present severe economic harm to small businesses" as senators discuss the RFS with administration officials. Link [here](#).

ETHANOL, GRAINS PRODUCERS WANT BRAZIL PUNISHED: U.S. ethanol and grains producers are urging the U.S. Trade Representative to suspend Brazil's tariff benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences, which grants tariff relief on imports from developing countries, because of complaints that the South American country has put in place a restrictive quota on ethanol imports. "Brazil's decision to engage in protectionist trade measures as a result of a short-term and market-oriented deficit against the largest agriculturally related product imported from the U.S. is not in keeping with the spirit of the GSP program," the Renewable Fuels Association, Growth Energy and the U.S. Grains Council wrote in a [letter](#) to Lighthizer on Thursday.

SKEPTICISM OVER CBO'S ANWR ESTIMATE: Count Taxpayers for Common Sense among the deep skeptics that Senate Energy Chairman [Lisa Murkowski](#)'s proposal to open ANWR would generate more than \$1 billion in revenue over the next decade, as the Congressional Budget Office estimated it would. The non-partisan group forecasts that oil and gas companies would have to bid at levels 10 times higher than historic norms to meet the \$1 billion CBO estimates would flow into federal coffers. "If Congress were to enact legislation that opened up the 1002 Area to oil and gas leasing, it is unlikely — near to the point of impossibility — that such leasing would generate the amount of revenue to the Treasury that the CBO predicts," the group's new [fact sheet](#) states. It released a second fact sheet outlining [a series of other options](#) to raise revenue through federally-owned natural resources.

California's dirty secret? The Center for Biological Diversity released a report finding three-quarters of California's oil is as harmful to the environment as Canadian tar sands. Link [here](#).

High stakes in the desert: Failing to keep the Navajo Generating Station open could put at risk the reliability of Arizona's electric grid and the regional power supply, according to [a study](#)

funded by coal giant Peabody Energy. Among the cities potentially hardest hit include Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tucson and Flagstaff, according to the study. Summary link [here](#).

NO FUN! Amid [reports](#) the National Park Service is considering closing the National Mall to softball and frisbee games permanently, the Sierra Club's DC-based softball team, the Conservation Laborers Against Wrong, vowed a fight. "Maybe the hundreds of Congressional Republican staffers who play organized softball every summer will let Zinke and Trump know there is nothing to drill or mine for underneath the Mall," the team's coach Lauren Lantry quipped.

BLOWN AWAY? Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg visited an Oklahoma wind farm where he said "it's clear that wind and renewables are the future." Full post [here](#).

QUICK HITS

— Millions Of Puerto Ricans Just Lost Power Again After A Line Repaired By Whitefish Energy Failed. [BuzzFeed](#).

— With Christie Out, New Jersey Poised To Rejoin New England In Climate Pact. [WNPR](#).

— As China Moves To Other Energy Sources, Its Coal Region Struggles To Adapt. [NPR](#).

— Oil prices rise on supply cuts and political tensions in Saudi Arabia. [Reuters](#).

— One of the World's Biggest Miners Is About to Go Coal-Free. [Bloomberg](#).

— FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant experiences leak within facility. [WSKG](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

9:00 a.m. — The Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment and Princeton E-affiliates Partnership hosts [annual meeting](#) with EDF's Fred Krupp keynoting, Maeder Hall, 86 Olden Street, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

12:30 p.m. — U.S. Senators to Hold Press Phone Call from Major UN Climate Conference in Germany, RSVP: Sean_Bartlett@foreign.senate.gov

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To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/11/tax-reform-senate-energy-watchers-watch-bill-025483>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Senate GOP's tax bill points to nasty fight ahead [Back](#)

By Bernie Becker, Brian Faler and Aaron Lorenzo | 11/09/2017 11:49 AM EDT

Yawning divisions have emerged between the House, Senate and White House over tax reform, raising doubts about whether Republicans will be able to achieve their most important political and policy priority before the end of the year.

The Senate and House are split on some key issues, including the top tax rate and the timing of the corporate tax cut, and also at odds with President Donald Trump in many areas. Hard bargaining, battles between GOP factions and an onslaught of lobbying are the gauntlets Republicans will have to run to get legislation to Trump's desk by the end of the year — and into their mailers and ads for the 2018 elections.

If one thing unifies Republicans and makes the job easier than it might appear, it's the fear that they will have nothing to take into those contests after the failure of another marquee effort, repealing and replacing Obamacare. House Speaker Paul Ryan and other GOP leaders used the drubbing the party took in Tuesday's election in Virginia as a warning to the rank and file: Pass tax reform or face the wrath of Republican voters.

"We are going to conference," Ryan told reporters Thursday, after the Senate unveiled its long-awaited plan and House tax writers advanced theirs to the House floor. "Yes, the Senate bill is going to be different than the House bill because that's the legislative process."

The House Ways and Means Committee approved its bill on a party-line 24-16 vote, and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy said the full House would vote on it next week. The Senate Finance Committee will start working on its bill next week, maybe as early as Monday.

One of the first differences to emerge was the Senate's plan to delay slashing the corporate tax rate to 20 percent from 35 percent until 2019. The House wants to cut the tax immediately, and has the White House on its side.

Cutting the corporate rate is the centerpiece of the GOP plan to lower tax rates and spur faster economic growth. But the Senate is trying to limit the revenue impact to allow a bill to pass with just 51 votes and avoid a possible Democratic filibuster.

In another break with Trump, neither the Senate bill or the House bill includes a repeal of the Obamacare individual mandate requiring Americans to have health insurance. But Senate Republicans are still considering a repeal to help cover the cost of making some tax cuts permanent.

GOP leaders are talking with rank-and-file members to assess whether they have the necessary 50 votes to scrap the least popular part of Obamacare.

"I'd sure like to do that," said Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) "I think we're counting votes. It sure gives us a lot more flexibility."

Trump has pushed for repealing the mandate, along with conservative senators and House members. But many lawmakers said reopening the health care debate would just make passing the tax bill harder.

The Senate plan would set a top individual tax rate of 38.5 percent, compared to the House's 39.6 percent for annual income above \$1 million, and keep deductions for people with high medical bills and for student loan interest that the House wants to discard.

It would completely eliminate a federal deduction for state and local taxes, while the House had to mollify a group of GOP lawmakers from high-tax blue states by keeping the deduction for property taxes, up to \$10,000.

The Senate kept the maximum mortgage deduction at the interest on loans up to \$1 million. The House would cut it to \$500,000.

The House targeted the estate tax — a favorite foil of conservative Republicans — for elimination in 2025, after doubling the current exemptions to about \$11 million for individuals and \$22 million for married couples. The Senate is proposing only to double the exemptions.

The House proposed expanding the child tax credit to \$1,600 per child from \$1,000. The Senate set the increase at \$1,650.

But that is still too low for some senators who want a \$2,000-per-child credit because they worry some middle-income people could otherwise see their taxes go up under the plan — and they have an ally in Ivanka Trump. "While we are glad to see an increase to the child tax credit, like the House bill, it is simply not enough for working families," Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Mike Lee (R-Utah), the main champions of the issue in the Senate, said in a joint statement.

On another hot-button issue, the treatment of "pass-through" businesses that pay individual tax rates, the Senate would set a top rate of 30 percent, while owners of those businesses have been clamoring for parity with corporations. The House is offering a super-low 9 percent rate on the first \$75,000 those businesses earn, which attracted praise from the powerful National Federation of Independent Business, which had panned the House bill last week.

Both bills would shift the U.S. to a "territorial" tax system that would largely shield offshore corporate income from U.S. taxation. But they parted ways on a mechanism to discourage more companies from moving abroad to take advantage of the change.

As the first details were trickling out about the Senate plan, Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady (R-Texas) unveiled a new round of changes to the House GOP's plan.

Their tax plan had ballooned beyond their budget, allowing them to cut taxes by no more than \$1.5 trillion, after Republicans earlier this week gutted a plan to crack down on international tax avoidance hated by the Koch brothers and a number of multinational corporations.

The revisions include hundreds of billions of dollars in new revenue aimed at filling that budget hole. Republicans did it in part by taking back much of the money — \$87 billion — they had lost when they watered down those overseas tax avoidance provisions.

Another \$70 billion would come from charging companies more in a one-time tax on their overseas earnings. Under the new plan, they'd pay 14 percent on their liquid assets and 7 percent on illiquid ones like factories overseas. That's up from 12 percent and 5 percent, respectively, under the previous proposal.

House lawmakers want to raise another \$20 billion by requiring people claiming the popular child tax credit to provide a Social Security number for their child, a provision long sought by Republicans aimed at preventing undocumented immigrants from taking the break.

Delaying their plans to repeal the estate tax by another year saved them \$21.5 billion. They'd raise another \$109 billion from companies tapping a long-standing break for research and development expenses.

Other House provisions would expand a tax on private university endowments and impose a surtax on life insurance companies.

The plan also would allow organizations such as charities and churches to engage in political speech without risking their tax-exempt status, and it restored a tax break for adopting children that had been on the chopping block.

Senate Finance Committee aides said the panel was still working to make its bill compliant with the chamber's budget rules, which don't allow the tax bill to add to deficits outside the 10-year budget window.

Given the GOP's slim majority in the Senate and the danger of a repeat of their Obamacare fiasco, some House Republicans were resigned to more or less having to defer to the Senate.

"I look at it more as a priority of process and procedure over substance," said Rep. Dennis Ross (R-Fla.). "While there are some very good things, don't get me wrong, substantively in our bill, I think the canvas will probably be painted in its final stage in the Senate once we give them the vehicle."

Ben White, Josh Dawsey, Colin Wilhelm, Seung Min Kim, Elana Schor and Jennifer Haberkorn contributed to this report.

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Perry to headline Texas event for pro-Trump outside group [Back](#)

By Maggie Severns | 11/10/2017 05:01 AM EDT

Energy Secretary Rick Perry will attend an event in Texas next week put on by America First Policies, the pro-Trump political nonprofit, according to an invitation obtained by POLITICO.

The invitation, which was sent to a Republican donor, says that Perry will headline a "roundtable discussion" in Houston on Monday afternoon. Details of the event's location will be available only to those who RSVP shortly before the event, the invitation said.

Perry's trip to Texas comes at an auspicious moment for America First Policies and its affiliated super PAC, America First Action. The organization is working to lock in support from donors and establish itself as a center of gravity for pro-Trump activity with close ties to the Trump administration.

America First was silent for much of this year, prompting some to question what role, if any, it would play for President Donald Trump, but organizers are working to reinvigorate the group's fundraising and reassert America First's close ties to the president. The group aims to spend \$100 million promoting tax reform and supporting 2018 candidates in the next year. Leaders of the group have convened at the White House in recent weeks, and with donors at a Texas ranch owned by megadonor T. Boone Pickens. Donald Trump Jr. was present at the ranch to signal his support.

Perry has deep ties to both the energy industry and donors in Texas, which helped power his two presidential runs. But Perry will not be in Houston asking for funds, said Texas businessman Roy Bailey, who is deeply involved in America First Policies. "It's a nice opportunity for people to understand what's going on at the Energy Department," Bailey said.

An Energy Department employee did not return a request for comment. Perry was in France this week meeting with energy leaders from other countries.

America First is ramping up activity as other high-profile Republican operatives and donors are accelerating pro-Trump outside efforts of their own.

Future45, which supported Trump during the 2016 elections with funding from casino billionaire Sheldon Adelson and the Ricketts family, announced a project that will spend in the tens of millions of dollars promoting tax reform earlier this month. Great America PAC, which is affiliated with Steve Bannon, began endorsing 2018 candidates in recent days.

Great America PAC's support for Roy Moore broke from Trump's support for Sen. Luther Strange in Alabama. America First plans to give unwavering support to Trump's agenda, which Bailey said could be a differentiator from other groups.

"We're not second-guessing anything; we're totally confident in [Trump's] ability to lead this nation and we're supporting him and the vice president," Bailey said.

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Trump's Interior chief 'hopping around from campaign event to campaign event' [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre and Esther Whieldon | 10/05/2017 05:01 AM EDT

Republican donors paid up to \$5,000 per couple for a photo with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke at a fundraiser held during a taxpayer-funded trip to the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to documents reviewed by POLITICO — raising questions about his habit of mixing official government business with political activism.

The new details about Zinke's March trip to the Caribbean, including the previously undisclosed invitation to the Virgin Islands Republican Party fundraiser, emerged after weeks of scrutiny of the former Montana GOP congressman's travels. The nearly two-hour event was one of more than a half-dozen times Zinke has met with big donors or political groups while on department-paid trips, Interior travel records and other documents show.

Ethics watchdogs say Zinke is combining politics with his Interior duties so frequently that he risks tripping over the prohibitions against using government resources for partisan activity, even though his appearance at the Virgin Islands event seems to have been legal. Democrats have also seized on the issue, including 26 House members who wrote in a letter Tuesday that Zinke's travels "give the appearance that you are mixing political gatherings and personal destinations with official business."

Zinke has said all his actions have obeyed the law, dismissing concerns about his travel as "a little BS."

But some ethics advocates say Zinke's attendance at a fundraiser during his first month as secretary is not in line with past administrations' conduct, even if he crossed no legal red lines.

"It happens on occasion with other Cabinet secretaries, perhaps even a little more often as you get near the election, but it is not a very common practice for Cabinet members to be hopping around from campaign event to campaign event like we're seeing with Zinke," said Craig Holman, government affairs specialist for government watchdog Public Citizen.

The secretary is already under investigation by his department's inspector general over his use of taxpayer-funded private planes for some of the trips, and the Office of Special Counsel is looking into an activist group's allegations that he violated the Hatch Act, the law limiting political activism by federal employees. The White House has cracked down on Cabinet

members' travel habits following former HHS Secretary Tom Price's resignation on Friday, which occurred after POLITICO reported on his own expensive flights.

Zinke visited the Virgin Islands from March 30 to April 1 on an official trip related to the Interior Department's role overseeing the U.S. territory. On his first day, following a "veterans meet and greet" and a reception with Gov. Kenneth Mapp, he appeared in his personal capacity at a March fundraiser for the local Republican Party at the patio bar of the Club Comanche Hotel St. Croix, department records show.

Tickets for the fundraiser ranged from \$75 per person to as much as \$5,000 per couple to be an event "Patron," according to Zinke's official calendar and a copy of the invitation. Patrons and members of the host committee, who paid \$1,500 per couple, could get a photo with Zinke at the start of the event, which was attended by local party members and elected officials.

The following day, Zinke took a \$3,150 flight on a private plane, paid for by the department, from St. Croix to official functions on St. Thomas and returned later that evening. Interior Department officials said there was no other way to accommodate his schedule, which included official events on both islands commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Dutch government transferring control of the islands to the United States.

Zinke is allowed to engage in partisan political activity in a "purely personal (not official) capacity," so long as he does not use government resources, according to Interior Department guidelines on the Hatch Act and other federal laws. The invitation to the GOP fundraiser did not identify Zinke by his official title and included a disclaimer that the money is being solicited by the local party and "not by any federal official."

All told, Zinke has spent around \$20,000 for three charter flights as secretary, nowhere near the \$1 million tab Price racked up on non-commercial trips. But he has on numerous occasions attended political receptions, spoken to influential conservative groups or appeared alongside past campaign donors during trips he has taken outside of Washington, D.C., for official department business.

In one instance, Zinke gave a motivational speech for a professional hockey team owned by a major campaign contributor that he said was official business — and which required him to charter a \$12,000 flight to Montana for an appearance at the Western Governors Association the next day.

In another case, during a speech to the Western Conservative Summit in Denver, he was introduced via a recorded voice as the Interior secretary and Zinke proceeded to talk about the agency's priorities. The summit was organized by the Centennial Institute, which bills itself as Colorado Christian University's think tank and is a part of the State Policy Network of organizations that collectively push for conservative state-level legislation.

An Interior spokeswoman said Zinke always follows the law but declined to answer specific questions about his appearance at the Virgin Islands fundraiser, nor say whether he would keep raising political money. The agency also has yet to post Zinke's trip expenses involving any of

the political events.

"The Interior Department under the Trump Administration has always and will always work to ensure all officials follow appropriate rules and regulations when traveling, including seeking commercial options at all times appropriate and feasible, to ensure the efficient use of government resources," spokeswoman Heather Swift said in a statement.

Swift did not respond to questions about whether the department had gotten reimbursement for the political portion of Zinke's three-day Virgin Islands trip, as the head of one watchdog group says it should have.

"Some of this travel is clearly political and that part of the travel should have been paid for by the RNC, NRCC, state political parties, a campaign committee or Zinke personally," said Daniel Stevens, executive director of the Campaign for Accountability.

No payments to the department are listed in the Virgin Islands Republican Party's FEC records.

Zinke is not the first Interior secretary, or Cabinet member, to have his activities questioned.

In 2012, a watchdog group called Cause of Action urged the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether President Barack Obama's then- Interior Secretary Ken Salazar had violated the Hatch Act while taking an Obama reelection campaign RV tour of Colorado with a couple of lawmakers and the state lieutenant governor. Local organizers of one stop on that tour had billed Salazar on its online events calendar as attending the political rally in his official role. OSC would not say whether its investigation uncovered any problems, but [travel records](#) Interior has posted show that one of Salazar's aides had told the tour's coordinator the schedule "should not refer to (Salazar as) 'secretary.'" Salazar did not respond to a request for comment.

A former Salazar aide, who was not authorized to speak on the record, said the Obama administration generally tried to avoid scheduling political events that coincided with official travel because it was difficult to divvy up what expenses should be reimbursed by a campaign.

The special counsel's office [found](#) Obama HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in violation of the Hatch Act in 2012, saying she had made "extemporaneous partisan remarks" by endorsing a candidate for North Carolina governor during a speech she made in her official capacity. Sebelius tried to scrub the violation by reclassifying the appearance as political and reimbursing the Treasury Department for costs associated with the trip.

Sally Jewell, who was Interior secretary during Obama's second term, said Zinke was within his rights to appear at the fundraiser in the Virgin Islands. Jewell said she once appeared at a fundraiser for Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell while in Obama's Cabinet, though she paid her own way to Washington state and was not identified by her official title.

"If he had legitimate business while he's on the island, to do a political thing on the side, I don't think that is that unusual," Jewell said in an interview.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt canceled his scheduled appearance at a fundraiser for the Oklahoma Republican Party in April because an invitation had identified him by his official title and said he would discuss his work at the agency. EPA ethics officials said he would have been cleared to attend the event if not for that language on the invitation.

Watchdog groups say Zinke's behavior fits a pattern for Trump's Cabinet.

"These government resources have been abused by this administration," said Virginia Canter, an executive branch ethics counsel for Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington who previously worked as an ethics official for Presidents George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush and Obama. "To the extent that some of that supports their political ambitions is inconsistent with the intent of this authority."

The Campaign for Accountability called on Interior's inspector general and the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether Zinke violated the Hatch Act or department ethics rules with his speech to the hockey team, which the group said appeared to be a favor for a donor. Interior's IG office announced its investigation earlier this week, and OSC told the Campaign for Accountability that it was looking into the group's complaint, according to an email shared with POLITICO. The OSC declined to comment.

Reps. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Donald McEachin (D-Va.) have asked Interior's IG to also look into any trips on which the secretary was accompanied by his wife, Lola Zinke, who is chairing the campaign of Montana Republican Troy Downing, a candidate to unseat Democratic Sen. Jon Tester next year. Swift said Lola Zinke was not in the Virgin Islands and has paid her own way whenever she has traveled with her husband on official trips.

Many who know him see Zinke's travels as an attempt to keep in touch with political contacts as he contemplates what he will do after leaving the Trump administration. Back home, the 55-year-old former Montana congressman is seen as an attractive candidate for the open-seat governor's race in 2020, when Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock will have to step down because of term limits.

"I think he's definitely got political aspirations; that's one of the reasons why he is where he is at right now," said Land Tawney, executive director of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, a Montana-based sportsman group that supported Zinke's bid for Interior secretary. "You don't go from being a Montana legislator to a first-term congressman to [Interior] secretary without having ambition."

The Virgin Islands trip was Zinke's first interaction with big donors or influential conservative groups during his travel as Interior secretary.

A weeklong trip in May that took Zinke through Montana, Utah and California also offered a chance to squeeze in some political events.

Zinke delivered the keynote speech at the RNC spring meeting on May 11 in Coronado, Calif. Zinke had flown to California the previous night, after several days touring monuments in Utah,

and the RNC speech was his only event in the state aside from a meeting earlier that afternoon with Rep. Amata Radewagen, the Republican delegate from American Samoa, and members of the American Tunaboat Association.

The next day, Zinke flew back to Montana, where he joined Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.) and Vice President Mike Pence to tour a coal mine on the Crow Indian reservation operated by the Westmoreland Coal Co.

The trip offered Zinke and Pence an opportunity to tout the Trump administration's work to promote new coal mining on federal lands — and it allowed them to make a brief detour to promote Zinke's congressional replacement. That Friday night, Zinke, Pence and Daines attended a political rally for GOP candidate Greg Gianforte, and Zinke attended a get-out-the vote event for the Montana GOP the next day.

Zinke apparently paid for his return trip to Washington out of his own pocket — it was marked "personal travel" on his calendar, a designation not applied to the other flights on that trip.

Gianforte, whose wife is a major political donor in Montana, won the May 25 special election to take over Zinke's House seat.

Greg and Susan Gianforte donated more than \$10,000 to Zinke's 2016 congressional campaign and another \$10,000 to a joint Zinke-Daines PAC, according to federal records. The couple donated \$5,000 for his earlier run for Congress.

Zinke met with big influencers and donors in June as well.

On June 25, he flew from D.C. to Reno, Nev., where his only scheduled event was a meeting of the Rule of Law Defense Fund, a group of Republican attorneys general that has been linked to the Koch brothers, where he spoke and took questions for about 30 minutes, according to his schedule.

After his remarks, he sat at a dinner table with Montana's attorney general, the government relations specialist for the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino and Las Vegas Sands, and Koch Industries lobbyist Allen Richardson, Interior documents show.

The next day, Zinke flew to Las Vegas for an event on public lands in nearby Pahrump, Nev., and a speech that night to the National Hockey League's Vegas Golden Knights. Bill Foley, the team owner and chairman of Fidelity, introduced Zinke. Foley donated \$7,800 to Zinke's 2014 campaign, while employees and PACs associated with Fidelity and related companies gave another \$180,000. Interior officials said the speech to the NHL team was part of Zinke's official duties, and they pointed to scheduling conflicts it created to justify his use of a \$12,000 private plane to get to a Western Governors Association meeting in Montana the next day.

In July, Zinke spoke to several conservative groups in Colorado during a three-day trip that also included tours of Interior Department facilities in the state. He flew into Denver on July 20 so he could appear that evening at a closed-door reception for the American Legislative Exchange

Council, a group of conservative state legislators, lobbyists and industry groups that has pushed for more state control over federal lands.

And over the next two days, he was a featured speaker at a Republican committee roundtable and attended the Western Conservative Summit in Denver.

Eric Wolff contributed to this report.

To view online [click here](#).

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Court again freezes Clean Power Plan litigation for 60 days [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 11/09/2017 04:55 PM EDT

The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals today once again placed the lawsuits over the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan [in abeyance](#) for another 60 days, until Jan. 8.

The court's single-page order did not include any sort of note such as the one included in the court's previous 60-day abeyance order on Aug. 8. In that order, two of the judges attached a stern [note](#) saying EPA was skirting its statutory duty to regulate greenhouse gases.

EPA last month released its proposed repeal, and will take public comment through Jan. 16. The agency has yet to release its advance notice of proposed rulemaking seeking suggestions on whether and how to craft a narrower replacement regulation.

WHAT'S NEXT: The court ordered EPA to file status updates on its CPP repeal effort every 30 days.

To view online [click here](#).

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Final defense policy bill would require Pentagon climate change study [Back](#)

By Connor O'Brien | 11/09/2017 04:04 PM EDT

The Pentagon would be required to detail threats posed by climate change to military installations under the compromise version of the National Defense Authorization Act, [H.R. 2810 \(115\)](#), released today.

The legislation calls on the Pentagon to rank the 10 most vulnerable installations within each service to the effects of climate change over the next two decades — including from rising sea

levels, flooding, drought and wildfires — and outline steps to mitigate any damage.

The report would be due within a year of the bill's enactment.

The climate change study was included in the House version of the defense policy bill, and the Senate accepted the provision in a joint conference committee.

Conservatives attempted to strip the provision during House floor debate in July, but Democrats and moderate Republicans joined to preserve the study requirement.

To view online [click here](#).

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Wheeler attended Murray meetings on DOE coal aid but says he didn't write company's pitch [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 11/08/2017 01:08 PM EDT

Andrew Wheeler, the nominee for EPA deputy administrator, says he represented Murray Energy in meetings with Energy Department and congressional officials to support Trump administration efforts to prop up ailing coal-fired power plants.

Wheeler, who counted Murray among his clients as a lobbyist at Faegre Baker Daniels, faced numerous questions at his confirmation hearing today over his work for the company, which would be one of the main beneficiaries of DOE's proposed grid rule, and its CEO Bob Murray, a top supporter of President Donald Trump. Wheeler said he attended a Murray Energy meeting at DOE where the grid proposal was discussed several months ago, as well as a meeting on Capitol Hill on the subject. He said he de-registered as a lobbyist in August.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse pressed Wheeler over Murray's comments in a recent PBS Frontline documentary. The CEO said he gave Trump "an action plan" outlining coal policies to pursue, including eliminating the Clean Power Plan.

"I did not work on that and I do not have a copy of that memo," Wheeler told Whitehouse at the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing.

Wheeler said Murray gave him a copy to read in December or January. "I looked at it and handed it back to him, I don't have it," Wheeler said, adding that he did not recall any specifics.

Whitehouse said he hopes to get a copy of the plan with the help of EPW Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) now that Wheeler confirmed its existence.

WHAT'S NEXT: The committee will likely vote on Wheeler's nomination in the coming weeks.

To view online [click here](#).

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This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 2/12/2018 10:17:47 PM
Subject: FW: Questions about EPA morale

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 4:30 PM
To: 'Fimrite, Peter' <PFimrite@sfnchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Here is another interview you can pull from.

•☐☐☐☐☐☐ <http://news3lv.com/news/local/epa-chief-scott-pruitt-goes-one-on-one-with-news-3>

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 4:27 PM
To: 'Fimrite, Peter' <PFimrite@sfnchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

In terms of these additional questions, we have addressed them in interviews with The New York Times and CBS News and you can pull your answers from them.

•☐☐☐☐☐☐ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/02/podcasts/the-daily/scott-pruitt-epa.html>

•☐☐☐☐☐☐ <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/scott-pruitt-talks-with-major-garrett-full-interview/>

There was a lot of work from various people to get you the answers to your questions. We look forward to reading your story!

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 4:21 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Any chance I could talk to Scott Pruitt? I need him to explain his philosophy, why he is doing what he is doing, ie: how the EPA had been weaponized in the past to choose winners and losers; how superfund sites have languished because of a lack of decision making; that climate change cannot be regulated because it was not part of the original mission; why it is important for him to streamline the agency. Even a statement from him or a series of quotes I could use along these lines would be helpful if he's not available.

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 10:00 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

The answers with my names next to them are on the record. The tea leaves is not but let me see if I can get that approved. Does that work?

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 12:58 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every employee, to EPA’s Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words “climate change” were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **“Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focused on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **“Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **“No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **“We don’t discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9 Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: [@pfimrite](https://twitter.com/pfimrite)

To: Dennis, Brady[Brady.Dennis@washpost.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:48:29 PM
Subject: RE: Hey

I have been told that is not the case. The statement below was written by our contract office.

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Dennis, Brady [mailto:Brady.Dennis@washpost.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:11 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Hey

Sorry, just want to clarify. Attaching a screenshot from the online contract. It says that it was “not competed,” which seems to suggest no-bid. But you’re just saying that’s not the case?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:02 PM
To: Dennis, Brady <Brady.Dennis@washpost.com>
Subject: Hey

Your story says it was a no-bid contract. That is not accurate and we have this on-the-record statement regarding that “no-bid” language:

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on

Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Fri 10/6/2017 7:14:10 PM
Subject: FOR APPROVAL: EPA Afternoon News Highlights 10.6.17
EPA Afternoon News Highlights 10.6.17.docx

EPA Afternoon News Highlights 10.6.17

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Phoenix Business Journal: EPA Chief: Obama Climate Change Policy ‘Going Away’; Approves Arizona Plan For Haze, Coal Plant

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt is in Arizona today and confirmed the Trump administration is getting rid of one of the signature climate change policies set in place by former president Barack Obama. “It’s going away,” Pruitt said in an interview in Phoenix with the Business Journal. The Trump EPA plans on ending Obama’s Clean Power Plan. That plan aimed to cut carbon emissions from power plants as part of the U.S. role in the international Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The Clean Power Plan rule, however, was challenged in court by more than two dozen states including Arizona and Pruitt when he served as Oklahoma attorney general, and its implementation was halted by the U.S. Supreme Court. Now, the EPA plans on ending the program saying it oversteps the agency’s powers.

Bloomberg BNA: Trump Taps Former Inhofe Staffer For EPA's No. 2 Slot

Another former member of Oklahoma Sen. James Inhofe's (R-Okla.) team could soon be joining the EPA's leadership.

The Trump administration tapped Andrew Wheeler to serve as the Environmental Protection Agency's deputy administrator. Wheeler previously served under Inhofe as both staff director and chief counsel for the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. Wheeler currently works at the Faegre Baker Daniels, where he's lobbied on behalf of companies such as Murray Energy Corp., Energy Fuels Resources Inc., and Xcel Energy. Murray Energy declined to comment on Wheeler's nomination. Inhofe praised Wheeler's selection in a statement shortly following the White House's Oct. 5 announcement.

E&E News: Team Studying Regional Offices; No Revamp Decisions Yet — COO

A U.S. EPA team is evaluating the agency's network of 10 regional offices to find the best approach for delivering services but has not yet decided whether any downsizing is warranted,

Chief of Operations Henry Darwin said in an interview this morning. The team, made up of both career and political appointees, is reviewing "what functions are performed where and why in an effort to try to find" the best model or means "by which we can deliver our mission in the remote areas of the country," Darwin said. Asked whether the review could lead to closure or consolidation of some offices, "I think it's too soon to make any kind of statement or conclusion," Darwin said. "We just simply aren't far enough along to know whether that will be part of our conclusions or recommendations" to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

The Hill: EPA To Argue Obama Climate Rule Violates Law: Report

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is reportedly set to repeal the Obama administration's landmark climate rule for power plants, arguing that it violates federal law. The EPA is planning to target the legality of the central tenant of the Clean Power Plan, Bloomberg reported, citing agency documents: that it directs states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions however they saw fit. Under the rule, the federal government set reduction carbon targets for states and then asked them to find ways to hit those targets on their own, rather than by regulating a single source of pollution. That means some states are planning to replace carbon-heavy coal power plants with cleaner energy such as natural gas or renewables.

E&E News: Trump Plans To Ax Obama Rule; No Replacement Yet

The Trump administration is proposing to repeal the Obama-era Clean Power Plan, arguing that the climate rule "exceeds the EPA's statutory authority," according to a copy of U.S. EPA's plans obtained by Politico. The announcement, long expected, will be formalized in a 43-page draft rule to rescind the Obama regulation aimed at clamping down on power plants' greenhouse gas emissions. The Trump EPA "has not yet determined" whether it will promulgate a replacement rule, according to the notice. EPA "is considering whether it is appropriate to propose such a rule and is intending to issue an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) in the near future," the notice says. The agency signaled, however, that its preference would be to regulate specific sources of emissions as opposed to the broader requirements of the Clean Power Plan, which sought to cut carbon dioxide 32 percent by 2030.

NTK Network: Dem Senator Questions EPA Nominee's 'Heart'

Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) questioned the "heart" of Trump EPA nominee Dr. Michael Dourson at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing on Wednesday. "I always care about surrounding myself with people who have a good mind, but also a good heart, and there's no question you have a good mind," Carper said to Dourson. The Delaware senator told the nominee that he does not question his intellectual credentials. "There's a question about your heart," he added. "I don't mind people saying to me that they think I'm dumb. I don't like it, but

what really hurts me is when they question my heart. And there's really serious questions about your heart."

The Daily Caller: Leaked Docs Lay Out EPA's Plans For Repealing Obama's Signature Global Warming Rule

The Trump administration will argue repealing the centerpiece of the Obama administration's global warming agenda will lift a \$33 billion regulatory burden off the U.S. power sector, according to leaked documents. In the coming days, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will propose repealing the Clean Power Plan (CPP), and solicit public comment for what should replace it, according to a document obtained by Bloomberg. The document doesn't lay out a plan to propose a replacement to the CPP, which the Obama administration relied on to build support for the Paris climate accord. A coalition of states, businesses and unions sued to have the regulation struck down shortly after it was proposed in 2015. EPA will argue the CPP is not only illegal, but would cost \$33 billion to comply with. EPA used a different calculation for the "social cost of carbon" metric to generate a new cost-benefit analysis

Reuters: Trump Picks Coal Lobbyist For EPA Deputy Role, Drawing Mixed Reaction

President Donald Trump on Thursday named Andrew Wheeler, a coal industry lobbyist and former congressional staffer, as his pick for deputy administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, prompting contrasting reactions from industry and environmental groups. The Sierra Club, an environmental group, called his nomination, which is subject to Senate confirmation, "absolutely horrifying," while a coal industry group and some Republican politicians said he was well qualified for the job. The EPA said in a statement Wheeler had spent four years at the agency's Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics during the George H. W. Bush and Clinton administrations, as well as many years on Capitol Hill, including as counsel for conservative Republican Senator James Inhofe. It said he currently works as a principal at FaegreBD Consulting, "providing guidance on federal regulatory and legislative environmental and energy issues."

Breitbart: Exclusive: EPA Document Proposes To Eliminate Clean Power Plan 'In Its Entirety'

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to repeal the agency's Obama-era climate change program, the Clean Power Plan (CPP), "in its entirety," according to a document obtained by Breitbart News. The 43-page document, titled, "Repeal of Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stations Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units" details how the EPA plans to repeal CPP through a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). This version of the document obtained by Breitbart News remains subject to change through inter-

agency review. The agency contends that the EPA, under former Administrator Gina McCarthy, exceeded its authority to regulate carbon emissions as stipulated by the Clean Air Act. The document proposes to eliminate the Clean Power Plan, and then suggested that they might release an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) that will reflect a more thoughtful and modest approach to regulating air pollution given the EPA's limited statutory authority. President Donald Trump signed an executive order in March ordering a review of the Clean Power Plan as well as other environmental regulations. Instead of Obama's stifling energy regulations, the Trump administration will promote policies that favor American "energy dominance."

National Afternoon News Highlights 10.6.17

The Washington Post: Trump Administration Narrows Affordable Care Act's Contraception Mandate

The Trump administration issued a rule Friday that sharply limits the Affordable Care Act's contraception coverage mandate, a move that could mean many American women would no longer have access to birth control free of charge. The new regulation, issued by the Health and Human Services Department, allows a much broader group of employers and insurers to exempt themselves from covering contraceptives such as birth control pills on religious or moral grounds. The decision, anticipated from the Trump administration for months, is the latest twist in a seesawing legal and ideological fight that has surrounded this aspect of the 2010 health-care law nearly from the start. Several religious groups, which battled the Obama administration for years over the controversial requirement, welcomed the action.

The Wall Street Journal: New Orleans Braces For Flooding Ahead Of Tropical Storm Nate

New Orleans officials are mobilizing police, firefighters, sewer workers and other staff to prepare for flooding ahead of Tropical Storm Nate, which forecasters expect will hit southeast Louisiana this weekend as a Category 1 hurricane. The city of 391,000 has spent months scrambling to repair equipment for its aging drainage system, following turbine and pump failures during heavy rain storms this July and August that caused severe flooding in parts of the city. Many residents had homes, shops and cars flooded. On Thursday, Mayor Mitch Landrieu said the city had 108 of its 120 pumps working. Louisiana National Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are helping the city prepare.

NO TRUMP TWEETS

Phoenix Business Journal

<https://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/news/2017/10/06/epa-chief-obama-climate-change-policy-going-away.html>

EPA Chief: Obama Climate Change Policy ‘Going Away’; Approves Arizona Plan For Haze, Coal Plant

By Mike Sunnucks, 10/6/17

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt is in Arizona today and confirmed the Trump administration is getting rid of one of the signature climate change policies set in place by former president Barack Obama.

“It’s going away,” Pruitt said in an interview in Phoenix with the Business Journal.

The Trump EPA plans on ending Obama’s Clean Power Plan. That plan aimed to cut carbon emissions from power plants as part of the U.S. role in the international Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The Clean Power Plan rule, however, was challenged in court by more than two dozen states including Arizona and Pruitt when he served as Oklahoma attorney general, and its implementation was halted by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Now, the EPA plans on ending the program saying it oversteps the agency’s powers.

Pruitt said one of his top priorities in keeping the EPA within existing laws and statutes and being less activist than the Obama administration.

“The last administration was punitive,” Pruitt said of Obama policies favoring renewable energy and looking to cut down on coal and carbon emissions.

Pruitt also announced today the EPA and Trump administration's approval of state plans dealing with haze and clean air.

That EPA move will help keep Salt River Project's coal-fired Coronado Generating Station stay open.

Previous Obama administration rulings could have prompted at least a partial shutdown of the 773-megawatt plant in far northeastern Arizona.

SRP has put environmental improvements into the plant.

Tempe-based SRP — one of the two big utilities in the Phoenix region — welcomed the move.

"The EPA decision is important for SRP customers and the state of Arizona as it reduces the plant's impact on regional haze while maintaining its ability to provide affordable and reliable power to our more than 1 million customers in the Valley," said SRP spokesman Scott Harelson.

Pruitt said the EPA's Arizona action shows the agency's willingness to work with states, utilities and others on regional issues.

He said the haze rule is more about visibility and "aesthetics" and not more public health-focused sections of federal law.

Pruitt said that state cooperation in policy making and regulatory decisions includes working with Democratic blue states as well as more Republican ones such as Arizona.

Pruitt also stressed the EPA's role in finding a balance between environmental stewardship and regulations and economic growth. He is in Phoenix today as part of the Trump administration promoting National Manufacturing Day.

He will also speak before the Arizona Manufacturers Council.

The EPA chief said businesses need "regulatory certainty" in order to invest and grow and that GDP growth and working with businesses is not contrary to the agency's regulatory and stewardship charges.

Environmentalists worry about the Trump administration and Republican Congress siding too much with industry when it comes to regulatory and issues such as climate change and emissions.

The Trump administration has already rolled back Obama regulations on coal.

Pruitt said it's Congress' job to determine laws related to emissions, water and environmental protection and the EPA's job to enforce them within those laws.

And if federal policies or actions are onerous or arbitrary businesses will pull back, Pruitt contends.

"They just shrink back," Pruitt said.

Sandy Bahr, director of the Sierra Club's Grand Canyon Chapter, faulted the EPA's dismantling of the Clean Power Plan.

"The dismantling of the Clean Power Plan fails to recognize the value of clean energy

development and how it benefits our communities,” said Bahr noting the years of planning, public outreach and feedback put into the policy.

The Obama plan looked to cut carbon dioxide emissions from U.S. power plants by 32 percent by 2020. It was part of U.S. efforts related the Paris climate accord and aimed to reduce asthma attacks and deaths and encourage other countries to also reduce emissions.

But it was challenged by states and others who argued it crossed the line of the EPA’s statutory and regulatory powers.

President Donald Trump — who is taking the U.S. out of the Paris accord — and the EPA have taken actions to end the power plan policy.

Pruitt said the EPA could roll back some other Obama policies he views as crossing the line on agency powers and that “pick winners and losers” in the energy sector.

Bahr said ending Clean Power Plan hurts clean energy development.

“For Arizona, especially, clean energy is key to our economic future, but for all of us,” Bahr said pointing to the public health benefits of lowering emissions. “Replacing the Clean Power Plan with a polluter-approved alternative that will harm our health and stall efforts to address climate change is irresponsible.”

Pruitt and other Trump administration officials' sometimes skeptical views on climate change as well as energy, automobile and business causes of it have been brought up by environmentalists and critics.

Pruitt said those questions which have been brought up at EPA confirmation and other hearings

on Capitol Hill looks to put political “jerseys” on each side.

“I don’t see this as a blue, red issue,” said Pruitt citing work his agency is doing and ready to do with more Democratic states such as Minnesota and California.

Bloomberg BNA

http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split_display.adp?fedfid=121766634&vname=dennotallissues&fn=121766

Trump Taps Former Inhofe Staffer For EPA's No. 2 Slot

By Abby Smith, 10/6/17

Another former member of Oklahoma Sen. James Inhofe's (R-Okla.) team could soon be joining the EPA's leadership.

The Trump administration tapped Andrew Wheeler to serve as the Environmental Protection Agency's deputy administrator. Wheeler previously served under Inhofe as both staff director and chief counsel for the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Wheeler currently works at the Faegre Baker Daniels, where he's lobbied on behalf of companies such as Murray Energy Corp., Energy Fuels Resources Inc., and Xcel Energy.

Murray Energy declined to comment on Wheeler's nomination. Inhofe praised Wheeler's selection in a statement shortly following the White House's Oct. 5 announcement.

“There is no one more qualified than Andrew to help [EPA Administrator] Scott Pruitt restore EPA to its proper size and scope,” Inhofe said.

If confirmed, Wheeler will join several former Inhofe staffers filling the ranks at the EPA:

- Ryan Jackson, Pruitt's chief of staff, also previously served as Inhofe's chief of staff;
- Mandy Gunasekara, who served as majority counsel for the Senate environment committee under Inhofe, is Pruitt's top air adviser;
- Byron Brown, oversight counsel for the Senate environment committee during Inhofe's chairmanship, is Pruitt's deputy chief of staff; and
- Daisy Letendre, Inhofe's former communications director, serves as a senior policy and communications adviser.

Prior Experience

Wheeler's name was rumored for the EPA's No. 2 slot as early as March. In recent weeks, the Trump administration has been steadily moving to fill top positions at the EPA. Nominees to head the EPA's air, water, and toxics offices, as well as its legal team, recently faced Senate scrutiny during an Oct. 4 confirmation hearing.

During his time working for the Senate environment committee, Wheeler worked on major environment and energy-related legislation, including the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and the proposed Clear Skies Act. The latter was a centerpiece of the George W. Bush administration's air quality program and would have established an emissions trading system to cut nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and mercury pollution from power plants—though the legislation never advanced.

Wheeler started his career at the EPA, working for four years in the agency's toxics office during the George H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations.

Pruitt, in a statement, said Wheeler “will bring extraordinary credentials to EPA that will greatly assist the agency as we work to implement our agenda.”

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060062949/>

Team Studying Regional Offices; No Revamp Decisions Yet — COO

By Sean Reilly, 10/6/17

A U.S. EPA team is evaluating the agency's network of 10 regional offices to find the best approach for delivering services but has not yet decided whether any downsizing is warranted, Chief of Operations Henry Darwin said in an interview this morning.

The team, made up of both career and political appointees, is reviewing "what functions are performed where and why in an effort to try to find" the best model or means "by which we can deliver our mission in the remote areas of the country," Darwin said.

Asked whether the review could lead to closure or consolidation of some offices, "I think it's too soon to make any kind of statement or conclusion," Darwin said. "We just simply aren't far enough along to know whether that will be part of our conclusions or recommendations" to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

Darwin, a former aide to Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey (R), arrived at EPA about three months ago to spearhead agency streamlining efforts. He did not give a timetable for completion of the review. In a follow-up email, an EPA spokesman only reiterated that the review is ongoing and that EPA's fiscal 2018 budget request does not support closing any offices.

Darwin's comments, however, appeared to at least crack the door to the possibility of restructuring the regional network, where close to half of EPA's 14,500 employees worked as of December, according to official figures.

Pruitt and other EPA officials have previously denied any discussions about shuttering regional offices. At a June congressional hearing, for example, Pruitt dismissed speculation that the

Chicago-based Region 5 office would be merged with the Region 7 office in Kansas as "pure legend."

Even so, Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.) soon after introduced S. 1474, which would bar the use of any fiscal 2018 funding to close, consolidate or eliminate any EPA regional or program office. The bill has yet to get a hearing or markup from the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Under President Trump's fiscal 2018 budget proposal, EPA's funding would be slashed by roughly 30 percent, or more than \$2 billion, accompanied by a workforce cut of some 3,800 employees.

While lawmakers are unlikely to go along with any reductions of that magnitude, EPA has been under long-term pressure to save money with funding that has been largely stagnant in recent years. By early last month, more than 360 employees had accepted voluntary buyouts.

That was far short of the 1,227 total buyouts the agency was authorized to offer in fiscal 2017, which ended last week. Asked whether he foresees the need for another round of workforce reductions, through buyouts, early retirements or reductions in force, Darwin said, "We'll have to see how the budget plays out."

He added, "That's really more a budgetary issue than a strategic planning issue."

While Darwin was brought to EPA in part to expand efforts to incorporate "lean" management principles into operations, the concept is not a pretext for downsizing, he said.

"It's about becoming more efficient and being able to perform the work that you do better," he said, "not necessarily with less people." He acknowledged, however, one upshot of applying "lean" principles is often accomplishing more with less.

The concept figures prominently in a draft EPA long-term strategic plan released yesterday for public comment. Under Pruitt's leadership, "EPA will become a Lean organization," the draft says, with the resulting system intended to deliver measurable results, eliminate waste from processes, maximize customer value and save taxpayers money.

As head of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and then as Ducey's chief of operations, Darwin was closely involved in promoting "lean" principles. In 2014 testimony while he was still running ADEQ, Darwin largely agreed with critics who say agencies are poorly run, adding that "most systems of government are indeed a mess."

But rather than privatization, a better course might be to encourage agencies to operate more like corporations, Darwin suggested.

Under EPA's proposed strategic plan, for example, the agency will "leverage" feedback from surveys and advisory groups to find openings for streamlining business processes and will strive to "alleviate challenges associated with outdated or non-existent policies," according to the document.

EPA intends to send the final version of the plan to Congress in February in conjunction with its 2019 budget request. Asked whether he's uncovered any particular weaknesses in EPA's operations, Darwin said much of his work so far has been focused "on making sure that we're setting ourselves up for successes by measuring the right things."

In an echo of Pruitt's "back-to-basics" agenda, he singled out the need to return to the agency's original authorizing statutes and review Congress' intent in creating those programs. The agency will then attempt "to measure our results against those intentions."

The agency will release "aggressive targets" for achieving the measures laid out in the strategic plan with next year's proposed budget. To set those targets, he said, "we are currently working on baselining where we are on a lot of these measures."

Asked for examples, Darwin said one area in which more data are needed is how long EPA takes

to issue permits. "We're gathering that data right now, and once we have that, I'll have a better sense of where we are operationally."

The draft plan also contains objectives — such as strengthening cybersecurity and upgrading employee training — that Darwin acknowledged could actually require more spending, but he added that he had not so far found any major funding needs.

Yesterday, President Trump nominated Andrew Wheeler to serve as EPA's deputy administrator. Across the federal government, the person holding that job typically assumes the role of chief operating officer (COO) for the agency.

But Darwin, who is also EPA's assistant deputy administrator, said that it was "very clear" in his conversations with Pruitt that he would continue to shoulder that responsibility

"So, I will remain as the COO for EPA," he said.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/354210-epa-to-argue-obama-climate-rule-violates-law-report>

EPA To Argue Obama Climate Rule Violates Law: Report

By Devin Henry, 10/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is reportedly set to repeal the Obama administration's landmark climate rule for power plants, arguing that it violates federal law.

The EPA is planning to target the legality of the central tenant of the Clean Power Plan, Bloomberg reported, citing agency documents: that it directs states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions however they saw fit.

Under the rule, the federal government set reduction carbon targets for states and then asked them to find ways to hit those targets on their own, rather than by regulating a single source of pollution.

That means some states are planning to replace carbon-heavy coal power plants with cleaner energy such as natural gas or renewables.

But the EPA is now set to say that a regulation affecting the broader electricity sector is outside the agency's purview.

The EPA will argue that "the Clean Power Plan departed from this practice by instead setting carbon dioxide emission guidelines for existing power plants that can only realistically be effected by measures that cannot be employed to, for, or at a particular source," the documents say.

The argument is similar to one pursued by the Clean Power Plan's most ardent opponents, who sued against the proposal when it was finalized in 2015. That group includes current EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was then attorney general of Oklahoma.

Though the Supreme Court has frozen implementation of the rule, a federal court has not ruled on the validity of the claims from the attorneys general.

Officials will announce their intention to repeal the Clean Power Plan soon and solicit comments on how to replace it, if at all, according to reports.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/10/06/stories/1060062953>

Trump Plans To Ax Obama Rule; No Replacement Yet

By Robin Bravender, 10/6/17

The Trump administration is proposing to repeal the Obama-era Clean Power Plan, arguing that the climate rule "exceeds the EPA's statutory authority," according to a copy of U.S. EPA's plans obtained by Politico.

The announcement, long expected, will be formalized in a 43-page draft rule to rescind the Obama regulation aimed at clamping down on power plants' greenhouse gas emissions.

The Trump EPA "has not yet determined" whether it will promulgate a replacement rule, according to the notice.

EPA "is considering whether it is appropriate to propose such a rule and is intending to issue an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) in the near future," the notice says.

The agency signaled, however, that its preference would be to regulate specific sources of emissions as opposed to the broader requirements of the Clean Power Plan, which sought to cut carbon dioxide 32 percent by 2030.

The notice says EPA emission limits "must be something that physically or operationally changes the source itself, and that is taken at or applied to individual, particular sources."

Many industry groups have pushed the Trump administration to replace the Clean Power Plan with a narrower rule that requires efficiency standards at power plants.

EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said in a statement: "The Obama Administration pushed the bounds of their authority so far that the Supreme Court issued a stay — the first in history — to prevent the so-called 'Clean Power Plan' from taking effect. Any replacement rule that the Trump Administration proposes will be done carefully and properly within the confines of the law."

The agency will argue that it has the ability to revisit existing regulations.

EPA "has inherent authority to reconsider, repeal or revise past decisions to the extent permitted by law so long as the Agency provides a reasoned explanation," the notice says.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/dem-senator-questions-epa-nominees-heart/>

Dem Senator Questions EPA Nominee's 'Heart'

No Author Listed, 10/5/17

Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) questioned the "heart" of Trump EPA nominee Dr. Michael Dourson at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing on Wednesday.

"I always care about surrounding myself with people who have a good mind, but also a good heart, and there's no question you have a good mind," Carper said to Dourson.

The Delaware senator told the nominee that he does not question his intellectual credentials.

"There's a question about your heart," he added. "I don't mind people saying to me that they think I'm dumb. I don't like it, but what really hurts me is when they question my heart. And there's really serious questions about your heart."

Carper quoted Maya Angelou in criticizing Dourson, and told him that people are "afraid" of his nomination.

Dourson's nomination has received praise from medical and environmental professionals across the country. Officials from the University of Nebraska, Michigan State, and the University of Minnesota have all offered support to his nomination, yet Carper finds it appropriate to personally attack Dourson.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/10/06/leaked-docs-lay-out-epas-plans-for-repealing-obamas-signature-global-warming-rule/>

Leaked Docs Lay Out EPA's Plans For Repealing Obama's Signature Global Warming Rule

By Michael Bastasch, 10/6/17

The Trump administration will argue repealing the centerpiece of the Obama administration's global warming agenda will lift a \$33 billion regulatory burden off the U.S. power sector, according to leaked documents.

In the coming days, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will propose repealing the Clean Power Plan (CPP), and solicit public comment for what should replace it, according to a document obtained by Bloomberg.

The document doesn't lay out a plan to propose a replacement to the CPP, which the Obama administration relied on to build support for the Paris climate accord. A coalition of states, businesses and unions sued to have the regulation struck down shortly after it was proposed in 2015.

EPA will argue the CPP is not only illegal, but would cost \$33 billion to comply with. EPA used a different calculation for the "social cost of carbon" metric to generate a new cost-benefit analysis

The document says the CPP will still yield "\$18.8 billion in energy efficiency benefits in 2030

and \$500 million in unrealized climate benefits,” Bloomberg reported.

“The Clean Power Plan departed from this practice by instead setting carbon dioxide emission guidelines for existing power plants that can only realistically be effected by measures that cannot be employed to, for, or at a particular source,” reads the EPA document.

“The Obama administration pushed the bounds of their authority so far that the Supreme Court issued a stay — the first in history — to prevent the so-called ‘Clean Power Plan’ from taking effect,” EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman told Bloomberg.

“Any replacement rule that the Trump administration proposes will be done carefully and properly within the confines of the law,” she said.

Environmentalists have already promised to file legal challenges against EPA to overturn any proposal they put forward. The Trump administration has been meeting with various stakeholders for months on possible CPP replacements.

The CPP aimed to cut carbon dioxide emissions from power plants 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and limit emissions from newly built plants as part of President Barack Obama’s commitment to the Paris climate accord.

The Obama administration pegged the CPP’s cost at \$8.4 billion, but the public health and “climate” benefits were pegged as high as \$54 billion.

Experts have quibbled over the Obama administration’s use of the “social cost of carbon” metric to justify the CPP, which was expected to force more coal-fired power plants to retire and shift the sector to be more natural gas and green energy-reliant.

The Obama EPA claimed the CPP would yield \$30 billion in “climate benefits” by 2030 resulting from reduced carbon dioxide emissions.

That was a controversial claim, and a working paper by the liberal Brookings Institution the EPA “shifted to a worldwide benefits approach, leading to a substantial increase in the estimated benefits.”

Basically, EPA counted the global benefits of reducing carbon dioxide as benefits enjoyed exclusively by Americans. Brookings fellows used a more traditional cost-benefit metric and found only \$2 billion and \$7 billion in climate benefits.

That means the Obama EPA inflated the CPP’s benefits between 4-fold and 15-fold.

Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-epa-wheeler/trump-picks-coal-lobbyist-for-epa-deputy-role-drawing-mixed-reaction-idUSKBN1CB014>

Trump Picks Coal Lobbyist For EPA Deputy Role, Drawing Mixed Reaction

By Eric Walsh, 10/6/17

President Donald Trump on Thursday named Andrew Wheeler, a coal industry lobbyist and former congressional staffer, as his pick for deputy administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, prompting contrasting reactions from industry and environmental groups.

The Sierra Club, an environmental group, called his nomination, which is subject to Senate confirmation, “absolutely horrifying,” while a coal industry group and some Republican politicians said he was well qualified for the job.

The EPA said in a statement Wheeler had spent four years at the agency’s Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics during the George H. W. Bush and Clinton administrations, as well as many years on Capitol Hill, including as counsel for conservative Republican Senator James Inhofe.

It said he currently works as a principal at FaegreBD Consulting, “providing guidance on federal regulatory and legislative environmental and energy issues.”

Inhofe said in the statement that no one is more qualified than Wheeler to help EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt “restore EPA to its proper size and scope.”

The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, an industry lobby group, called Wheeler extraordinarily qualified for the job, saying in a statement: “His understanding of a wide range of environmental policies and the policy development process — combined with his thoughtfulness, judgment and temperament — will enable him to be an outstanding Deputy Administrator.”

But the Sierra Club called his nomination “absolutely horrifying,” adding in a statement: “Andrew Wheeler is a big time lobbyist who has represented Big Coal for almost a decade, including in numerous lawsuits challenging the EPA. He is a friend to polluters, not to American families that rely on clean air and clean water.”

Pruitt led 14 lawsuits against the agency when he was Oklahoma’s attorney general, and has said he is not convinced that carbon dioxide from human activity is the main driver of climate change, a position widely embraced by scientists.

He was appointed by President Donald Trump, a climate change doubter, who campaigned on a pledge to boost the U.S. oil and gas drilling and coal mining industries by reducing regulation.

He also promised to pull Washington out of a global pact to fight climate change, which he did in June.

Breitbart

<http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2017/10/06/exclusive-epa-document-proposes-eliminate-clean-power-plan-entirety/>

Exclusive: EPA Document Proposes To Eliminate Clean Power Plan ‘In Its Entirety’

By Sean Moran, 10/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to repeal the agency’s Obama-era climate change program, the Clean Power Plan (CPP), “in its entirety,” according to a document obtained by Breitbart News.

The 43-page document, titled, “Repeal of Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stations Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units” details how the EPA plans to repeal CPP through a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). This version of the document obtained by Breitbart News remains subject to change through inter-agency review.

The agency contends that the EPA, under former Administrator Gina McCarthy, exceeded its authority to regulate carbon emissions as stipulated by the Clean Air Act. The document proposes to eliminate the Clean Power Plan, and then suggested that they might release an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) that will reflect a more thoughtful and modest approach to regulating air pollution given the EPA’s limited statutory authority.

President Donald Trump signed an executive order in March ordering a review of the Clean Power Plan as well as other environmental regulations. Instead of Obama’s stifling energy regulations, the Trump administration will promote policies that favor American “energy dominance.”

The Obama administration designed the Clean Power Plan to lower carbon emissions from existing power plants by 2030 to 32 percent below 2005 levels. Conservatives widely viewed the Clean Power Plan, along with the Paris Climate Treaty, to be part of Obama’s “war on coal.”

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt criticized the Clean Power Plan earlier this year, calling the regulation, “unlawful.” Pruitt said, “This is an effort to undo the unlawful approach the previous administration engaged in,” he said of the president’s executive order, “and to do it right going

forward with the mindset of being pro-growth and pro-environment.”

Myron Ebell, the Competitive Enterprise Institute’s (CEI) director of Energy and Environment programs and Trump administration EPA transition chair, argued that the Clean Power Plan remains illegal and would do devastating harm to the average American. Ebell said, “In particular, we applaud his action to begin withdrawing the EPA’s greenhouse gas rules, including the so-called ‘Clean Power’ Plan. These rules, which are clearly illegal, would raise electric rates for consumers significantly and do immense economic damage to the heartland states where U.S. manufacturing is now concentrated.”

The EPA document declares that they are “proposing to repeal the CPP in its entirety.”

The EPA contends in the document, under former Administrator Gina McCarthy, exceeded its statutory authority under the Clean Air Act to force states and power plants to comply with the Clean Power Plan’s regulation to lower carbon emissions.

Over 150 interested parties sued the EPA, including 27 states, 24 trade associations, 37 rural electric co-ops, and three labor unions sued the former EPA administration in the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, arguing that the CPP was unconstitutional. A bipartisan group of 34 Senators and 171 members of the House filed an amicus brief arguing that the CPP was illegal and skirted Congress’ authority to legislate on environmental issues.

In February 2016, the Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the CPP pending further review. On August 8, 2017 the court issued an order holding the case in abeyance for a 60-day review and directed the EPA to file status updates at 30-day intervals.

In March, President Donald Trump issued an executive order which the document cites, which affirms the “national interest to promote clean and safe development of our Nation’s vast energy resources, while at the same time avoiding regulatory burdens that unnecessarily encumber energy production, constrain economic growth, and prevent job creation.”

The Executive order also directed the EPA to “immediately review existing regulations that

potentially burden the development or use of domestically produced energy and appropriately suspend, revise, or rescind, those that unduly burden the development of domestic energy resources beyond the degree necessary to protect the public interest or otherwise comply with the law.” Subsequently, the EPA conducted a review of its environmental regulations, including the agency’s Clean Power Plan.

The EPA contends that their initial review of the CPP “raised substantial concerns that the CPP is not consistent with the policy articulated in Section 1 of the Executive Order.”

The EPA explained, “For example, numerous States, regulated entities and other stakeholders warned that the CPP threatened to impose massive costs on the power sector and consumers; invaded traditional areas of state regulation over the mix of energy generation within their borders, departed radically from prior regulatory practice and longstanding reading of the statute; and did not adequately ensure the national interest in affordable, reliable electricity, including from coal generation.”

The EPA contends in the proposed rulemaking that the EPA’s ability to “revisit existing regulations is well-grounded in the law.” The document cites *Chevron U.S.A. v. NRDC, Inc.*, *National Cable & Telecommunications Ass’n v. Brand X Internet Services*, and the *Clean Air Council v. Pruitt* cases to argue that the agencies have broad discretion to reconsider agency regulations at any time.

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) contains a cost-benefit analysis that examines repealing Obama’s Clean Power Plan. The EPA estimates that repealing CPP would provide up to \$33 billion in avoided compliance costs in 2030.

EPA Administrator Pruitt’s Scott decision to eliminate Obama’s Clean Power Plan serves as part of President Trump’s agenda to unravel Obama’s environmental legacy and pursue an America First policy of “energy dominance.”

In May, President Trump announced that the United States will withdraw from the 2015 Paris Climate Accord. The president said, “In order to fulfill my solemn duty to protect America and its citizens, the United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord.” Trump cited that the Paris Climate Accord alone could cost America 2.7 million lost jobs by 2025. Similarly to the

Clean Power Plan, Obama acted unilaterally without the consent of Congress and the American people to implement his climate agenda through the Paris Climate Accord.

Now EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was one of the first Attorneys General to sue the EPA over the Clean Power Plan, can start to repeal one of Obama's hallmark environmental programs.

EPA spokesperson Liz Bowman said in a statement to Breitbart News, "While we can't comment on the authenticity of the document, what we can say is that the Obama Administration pushed the bounds of their authority so far that the Supreme Court issued a stay – the first in history – to prevent the so-called 'Clean Power Plan' from taking effect. Any replacement rule that the Trump Administration proposes will be done carefully and properly within the confines of the law."

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/trump-administration-could-narrow-affordable-care-acts-contraception-mandate/2017/10/05/16139400-a9f0-11e7-92d1-58c702d2d975_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_birthcontrol-1124am%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.175aa928ead8

Trump Administration Narrows Affordable Care Act's Contraception Mandate

By Juliet Eilperin, Amy Goldstein and William Wan, 10/6/17

The Trump administration issued a rule Friday that sharply limits the Affordable Care Act's contraception coverage mandate, a move that could mean many American women would no longer have access to birth control free of charge.

The new regulation, issued by the Health and Human Services Department, allows a much broader group of employers and insurers to exempt themselves from covering contraceptives such as birth control pills on religious or moral grounds. The decision, anticipated from the Trump administration for months, is the latest twist in a seesawing legal and ideological fight that has surrounded this aspect of the 2010 health-care law nearly from the start.

Several religious groups, which battled the Obama administration for years over the controversial requirement, welcomed the action.

Women's rights organizations and some medical professionals portrayed it as a blow to women's health, warning that it could lead to a higher number of unintended pregnancies.

The rule change is among the recent moves by President Trump to dismantle initiatives enacted under the Obama administration. It fulfills a crucial promise Trump made as a candidate to appeal to social conservatives and that he repeated in May when he signed an executive order in the Rose Garden to expand religious liberty.

Senior Health and Human Services officials, briefing reporters early on condition of anonymity, contended the change will still leave "99.9 percent of women" with access to free birth control through their insurance. They said the estimate was based on the finite number of groups that have filed about 50 lawsuits over the provision.

This latest rewriting of the federal policy, in an interim final rule that takes effect immediately, broadens the entities that may claim religious objections to providing contraceptive coverage to nonprofit organizations and for-profit companies, even ones that are publicly traded. Also included are higher educational institutions that arrange for insurance for their students, as well as individuals whose employers are willing to provide health plans consistent with their beliefs.

A separate section covers moral objections, allowing exemptions under similar circumstances except for publicly traded companies.

As part of the rule, made publicly available in the Federal Register late Friday morning, administration officials estimate that 120,000 women at most will lose access to free contraceptives — many fewer than critics predict.

They write that they do not know how many employers or insurers that omitted contraceptive coverage before the ACA did so based on religious beliefs that would now allow them to be exempt. For that reason, the law says, HHS cannot predict how many entities will want

exemptions, other than the groups that have filed recent lawsuits or made other public statements against the Obama-era policy.

The analysis concludes that perhaps one-third of women who get insurance through such groups — the estimated 120,000 — would end up paying for birth control on their own.

The new policy “will result in some persons covered in plans of newly exempt entities not receiving coverage or payments for contraceptive services,” the rule acknowledges. But it says there is not “sufficient data to determine the actual effect . . . on plan participants and beneficiaries, including for costs they may incur for contraceptive coverage, nor of unintended pregnancies that may occur.”

The controversy first arose as part of the Obama administration’s initial definition of preventive care that insurers must cover under the ACA — which encompassed birth control, officials decided.

Subsequent accommodations gave exemptions of sorts to houses of worship, nonprofits with religious affiliations and closely held for-profit companies. Such employers have been able to opt out of providing the coverage and instead have their insurance company pay for it by notifying the insurer, a third-party administrator or the federal government. That situation will continue.

Organizations affiliated with the Catholic Church, which teaches against birth control other than by natural means, have been among the most vocal opponents. They’ve argued that having to cover the cost of contraception through health insurance plans is tantamount to being forced by the government to be complicit in a sin.

In the past several years, lawsuits have been filed by nuns, Catholic charities, hospitals and universities. Even now, litigation remains in several federal appeals courts.

One challenge was heard by the Supreme Court, and the justices ruled in 2014 that it was illegal to impose the mandate on “closely held corporations” such as Hobby Lobby, the craft store

chain. Its Christian owners had objected to the idea of paying for several kinds of the birth control that must be covered.

Despite HHS's officials 99.9 percent prediction, no one knows how many companies and institutions will now claim an exemption and, in turn, how many women will lose access to no-cost birth control.

The new rule is almost certain to spark fresh litigation. The National Women's Law Center — which estimates that in 2013 alone, the contraception requirement saved women \$1.4 billion in oral contraceptive costs — has vowed to challenge the Trump administration in court. It plans to argue that the new policy amounts to sex discrimination, since it will disproportionately affect women. It also plans to allege religious discrimination, arguing that it will allow employers to impose their religious beliefs on employees.

“The Trump administration is treating birth control as if it's not even health care. We see this as part of the larger war they are waging on women's health,” said Mara Gandal-Powers, senior counsel at the National Women's Law Center. “For some [women], it means choosing between preventive care like contraceptives and paying their rent, their mortgage, electric bill.”

Other groups focused on a different issue, with Anne Davis of Physicians for Reproductive Health arguing that the widened exemptions will leave many women “vulnerable to the whim of their employers. ... An employer's beliefs have no place in these private decisions, just as they would not in any other conversation about a patient's health care.”

The rule follows some social conservatives' increasing frustration with the pace at which the Trump administration has addressed their demands on issues such as the ACA contraception requirement. “An awful lot of people who voted for this president did so believing this was going to be something he would solve,” said Mark Rienzi, senior counsel for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, who hailed the rule as a correction of overly aggressive liberal actions under President Barack Obama. “There are other ways to get contraceptives. You don't need to force nuns to give people contraception.”

In his sweeping May 4 executive order on free speech and religious liberty, Trump directed his Cabinet to address the concerns of those who had “conscience-based objections” to contraceptive

coverage.

In previewing the rule for reporters, Roger Severino, director of HHS's office for civil rights and a longtime proponent of religious liberties, reiterated Trump's May pledge from the Rose Garden. The president had promised that "we will not allow people of faith to be targeted, bullied or silenced any more . . . We are ending the attacks on religious liberties."

On Friday, Severino elaborated: "That was a promise made, and this is the promise kept. . . . We should have space for organizations to live out their religious identity and not face discrimination because of their faith."

The HHS regulation was not the only administration action along these lines to be announced on Friday. Minutes later, Attorney General Jeff Sessions issued sweeping guidance to all executive departments and agencies on the Justice Department's interpretation of religious liberties. That also triggered an immediate backlash, with civil liberties groups asserting that he was essentially offering a license for discrimination.

Senior Justice Department officials said the guidance was merely meant to offer interpretation and clarification of existing law. But the interpretation seemed to be particularly favorable to religious entities, possibly at the expense of women, LGBT people and others.

The guidance, for example, said the ACA contraceptive mandate "substantially burdens" employers' free practice of religion by requiring them to provide insurance coverage for contraceptive drugs in violation of their religious beliefs or face significant fines.

Over the summer, a leaked early draft of the regulation began circulating in Washington, priming both sides for a renewed fight. That draft immediately drew praise from one side and condemnation from the other.

When the contraception mandate was first implemented in August 2012, it required all health insurance offered by employers to cover at least one of the 18 forms of birth control approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Since then, savings on the birth control pill have accounted

for more than half of the drop in all out-of-pocket prescription drug spending, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-orleans-braces-for-flooding-ahead-of-tropical-storm-nate-1507295025>

New Orleans Braces For Flooding Ahead Of Tropical Storm Nate

By Cameron McWhirter, 10/6/17

New Orleans officials are mobilizing police, firefighters, sewer workers and other staff to prepare for flooding ahead of Tropical Storm Nate, which forecasters expect will hit southeast Louisiana this weekend as a Category 1 hurricane.

The city of 391,000 has spent months scrambling to repair equipment for its aging drainage system, following turbine and pump failures during heavy rain storms this July and August that caused severe flooding in parts of the city. Many residents had homes, shops and cars flooded.

On Thursday, Mayor Mitch Landrieu said the city had 108 of its 120 pumps working. Louisiana National Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are helping the city prepare.

By 11 a.m. Friday, Tropical Storm Nate, with maximum sustained winds of 50 miles an hour, was heading toward Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, according to the National Hurricane Center. Central American officials linked the storm to at least 21 deaths in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras amid flooding and heavy rains, according to the Associated Press.

The storm is forecast to head north across the Gulf of Mexico as a tropical storm Saturday, according to the center, before strengthening to a Category 1 hurricane when it reaches the northern Gulf on Saturday evening, according to Friday's forecast. The Center has issued hurricane warnings for the Gulf Coast from Grand Isle, La., to the Alabama-Florida border.

Authorities throughout the region have started preparations. Florida Gov. Rick Scott on Thursday declared a state of emergency in 29 western counties. Governors in Alabama and Louisiana have declared states of emergency.

“High water is already a problem in many southeast Louisiana parishes,” said Louisiana emergency management official Jim Waskom. “High tides and easterly winds in recent days are impacting some areas ahead of the storm. Those conditions may worsen over the weekend.”

Mr. Landrieu, New Orleans’s mayor, said Thursday Nate was forecast to bring high winds and about 3 to 6 inches of rain to Louisiana’s largest city starting Saturday. Some coastal areas could see flooding, he said.

“There is no reason to panic, but there is reason to prepare,” said Mr. Landrieu, who declared a state of emergency.

Most of New Orleans sits just below sea level, and the city has long been plagued with periodic flooding, notably in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when surging water breached levees causing devastating flooding.

The problems with the drainage system this summer were made worse by conflicting reports from New Orleans Sewerage & Water Board officials about how many pumps were operating during heavy rain storms this summer, and at what capacity. Mr. Landrieu called for several board officials to resign and replaced staff of the entity. The city used emergency funds to expedite equipment repairs and buy backup generators to power the city’s pumps.

Ahead of Nate, the city is sending out crews to clean catch basins and other parts of the drainage system. Police are setting up barricades to block traffic at underpasses prone to flooding, Mr. Landrieu said. He urged residents not to drive through standing water.

Mr. Landrieu said residents and tourists should plan to stay indoors during the storm. Festivals or other events planned this weekend will have to be postponed, he said. The city placed boats and high-water vehicles around the city for rescues if needed.

Longtime resident Nate Burgess, 49 years old, who co-owns a motorcycle repair shop with his brother, said his shop didn't flood this summer, but the street where his brother lives flooded and "actually floated his car up to his house."

He was skeptical the pump system would be ready if a major storm hit, considering the problems the city had this summer. He blamed those drainage failures on "gross negligence."

"Twelve years after Katrina, every pump should be working," he said.

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 7/10/2017 4:41:11 PM
Subject: RE: Media Clips Service Contract

Cool

From: Hull, George
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2017 12:24 PM
To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Clips Service Contract

Jahan,

I checked with Definers whether the distribution of a daily compendium to aprox 600 is a problem. They said that it is no problem from their end. I have a list of 500+ who had received the clips under our previous contractor, which I could provide to Definers. Regarding the problem with e-mails going to spam, we had that problem with the previous contractor. It was pretty easy to solve; an e-mail from me warning people about it, solved the problem. Once you've moved it from Spam to your Inbox, the system remembers. I think it would reduce problems by having it sent out from one source, instead of having multiple redistribution points across the agency.

Also, just wanted to check, most of past leaders (appointed and career) have wanted the daily compendium in the morning. Do you still want it at 4:00 pm? - George

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2017 11:29 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Clips Service Contract

Agree – regions and comms directors can distribute the matrix in their offices

George, do we now have everything we need to get this in the system and get it moving?
thanksng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Monday, July 10, 2017 11:27 AM

To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>

Cc: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Media Clips Service Contract

I would update this to 8:00 AM EDT and then an afternoon matrix that is sent out by 4:00 PM EDT.

Additionally, in terms of sending this to 600 people, we might want to work with Mr. Pounder on clarifying what can and cannot be done to prevent anything from going into a SPAM filter or being shutdown. My suggestion would be daily, real-time alerts to roughly 100 people and then a matrix that would go to top people in each regional office and their press teams who can further distribute the information.

The contractor shall deliver the daily compendium by 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time. This briefing will go to a listserv maintained by the contractor of approximately 600 people. This daily compendium will include media coverage from the preceding 24 hour period, except in the case of the daily compendium for Monday mornings, which will also capture media coverage from the weekend. Alerts on breaking news will be delivered throughout the day from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2017 10:02 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Media Clips Service Contract

Hi Jahan,

Circling back to see if you have any comments, before we move forward on this. Thanks, George

From: Hull, George
Sent: Friday, July 07, 2017 6:40 PM
To: Nancy Grantham (grantham.nancy@epa.gov) <grantham.nancy@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Media Clips Service Contract

Nancy and Jahan,

Please find attached the draft "Statement of Work" for the Definers contract that we are developing. The Statement of Work is the section of the contract that lays out the details of what we expect the company to provide, parameters on delivery, timing, etc. I believe this language to be consistent with our conversations on the services we are seeking, but thought it was important that you review and have a chance to discuss or suggest changes. If you could get back to me on Monday morning, I can get any changes incorporated into the contract and continue forward. Thanks, George

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 2/28/2018 11:35:11 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs: POLITICO scoops Kushner gets security clearance downgrade, WP: The global community is looking to take advantage of him

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Wednesday morning. TWO THINGS YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION TO ...

-- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP FUND, the GOP super PAC closely aligned with Speaker Paul Ryan, will report that it raised \$9.7 million from January until Feb. 21. The group's cash-on-hand was \$21.7 million as of Feb. 21. The group, which has spent millions in the Pennsylvania special election, is also up with a new ad in that race, which is between Democrat Connor Lamb and Republican Rick Saccone. Their strategy: tie Lamb to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and the Obama administration. Sound familiar? ***The ad*** <http://bit.ly/2Cscoon> ... ***They reported another \$416,523 on media and mail on the Pennsylvania race yesterday.***

EXPECT CLF to continue playing a big role spending on 2018, and defining the contours of the race for the GOP.

-- A FEW NEW BITS OF NEWS ON GUNS: Lawmakers are beginning to talk about ways to help secure schools, and one idea that has come up a few times is installing technology that helps spot gunfire. D.C. has it (<http://wapo.st/2CprdYx>), and some believe it could allow quicker response times. Scot Peterson, the school officer who did not go into the building during the shooting in Florida, said he was not sure if it was gunfire at the time.

-- ALSO: The most likely gun-related bill that could pass and head to the president's desk is the Fix NICS bill, which penalizes government agencies for not sending information to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) has a hold on this bill -- which the House passed -- because of due process concerns. We were told yesterday that conservatives in the House and Senate want a

fix that would have a judge involved in any decision to confiscate a firearm from someone deemed a threat.

FOR YOUR AWARENESS -- POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL, via Steve Shepard: "Roughly two-in-three Americans now say gun control laws should be made more strict in the wake of the murder of 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, according to a number of polls, including a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll which shows support for stricter gun laws among registered voters at 68 percent, compared to just 25 percent who oppose stricter gun laws." <http://politi.co/2FCThGJ>

YIKES! -- JARED WATCH -- "Kushner's overseas contacts raise concerns as foreign officials seek leverage," by WaPo's Shane Harris, Carol Leonnig, Greg Jaffe and Josh Dawsey: "Officials in at least four countries have privately discussed ways they can manipulate Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and senior adviser, by taking advantage of his complex business arrangements, financial difficulties and lack of foreign policy experience, according to current and former U.S. officials familiar with intelligence reports on the matter.

"Among those nations discussing ways to influence Kushner to their advantage were the United Arab Emirates, China, Israel and Mexico ... It is unclear if any of those countries acted on the discussions, but Kushner's contacts with certain foreign government officials have raised concerns inside the White House and are a reason he has been unable to obtain a permanent security clearance." <http://wapo.st/2FaEAgh>

SCOOP -- ELIANA JOHNSON and ANDREW RESTUCCIA: "Kushner loses access to top-secret intelligence": "Presidential son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner has had his security clearance downgraded - a move that will prevent him from viewing many of the sensitive documents to which he once had unfettered access. Kushner is not alone. All White House aides working on the highest-level interim clearances - at the Top Secret/SCI-level - were informed in a memo sent Friday that their clearances would be downgraded to the Secret level, according to three people with knowledge of the situation.

"The SCI acronym stands for sensitive compartmented information, a category of information that comes from sensitive intelligence sources and must be walled off. The memo was not signed by chief of staff John Kelly, but it comes as the retired Marine general and other top White House aides are grappling with the fallout of a scandal involving former White House staff secretary Rob Porter, which revealed that dozens of White House aides had yet to receive permanent clearances but nonetheless had access to some of the country's deepest secrets." <http://politi.co/2EXLbLN>

-- "Kushner's security downgrade will hinder but not halt his Mideast peace role," by CNN's Jeremy Diamond: "[F]ive former top US officials who have tackled Middle East peace before Kushner told CNN they believe he will be able to continue overseeing the U.S. peace efforts and to engage in direct negotiations -- even if it makes his task more difficult. 'Honestly, over the years in all the negotiations I did, I found that the intelligence

is not as important as the direct meetings. The intelligence was not a big factor when it came to doing the negotiations themselves,' said Dennis Ross, who served as a U.S. envoy to the peace process under Republican and Democratic administrations. 'It's not to say it wouldn't help him.'" <http://cnn.it/2oAF58U>

-- **KUSHNER'S LATEST DRAMA** comes as his biggest defender -- Josh Raffel -- is heading for the exits. Axios's Jonathan Swan first reported that the former Hollywood PR exec is leaving. <http://bit.ly/2FCnXrJ>

MORE BACKGROUND CHECK PROBLEMS -- "Four Commerce Department appointees lose their posts after problems in background checks," by WaPo's Carol Leonnig, Damian Paletta and Josh Dawsey: "Four Commerce Department political appointees working on interim security clearances lost their jobs Tuesday because of problems in their background checks, the latest fallout from the intensifying public scrutiny on administration officials working without permanent clearances. The department determined that the four appointees - including one who worked for the agency for nearly a year and served for several months as a senior adviser to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross - should not be given access to classified information, according to multiple officials who requested anonymity to discuss personnel matters." <http://wapo.st/2CMRIZi>

TOUGH HEADLINE FOR HOPE -- "Hope Hicks Acknowledges She Sometimes Tells White Lies for Trump," by NYT's Nick Fandos: "Hope Hicks, the White House communications director, told House investigators on Tuesday that her work for President Trump, who has a reputation for exaggerations and outright falsehoods, had occasionally required her to tell white lies. But after extended consultation with her lawyers, she insisted that she had not lied about matters material to the investigations into Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential election and possible links to Trump associates, according to three people familiar with her testimony." <http://nyti.ms/2Fao0wT>

-- **"Hope Hicks draws line on Russia testimony,"** by Kyle Cheney: "White House communications director Hope Hicks declined to answer many questions during an appearance on Tuesday before the House Intelligence Committee, escalating a standoff over witness ground rules between the West Wing and House members investigating Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election. Hicks said she was acting on instructions from the White House when she refused to answer questions covering her time on the post-election transition and in the West Wing ...

"It is unclear whether President Donald Trump officially authorized her to invoke executive privilege on his behalf, a step some lawmakers believe he must take to make such a claim valid. By late afternoon, Hicks -- one of Trump's closest confidants -- had spent more than nine hours in a secure committee meeting room." <http://politi.co/2owXFj8>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs: Keep**

Medicare Part D working for seniors. CMS has proposed regulations that will increase costs and cause disruption for millions of seniors. Tell CMS: don't make changes to popular preferred pharmacy network plans that will stick America's seniors with higher premiums & drug costs. [Learn more.](#) *****

THE LUXE ADMINISTRATION -- "Ben Carson's HUD, Planning Cuts, Spends \$31,000 on Dining Set for His Office," by NYT's Glenn Thrush: "Department of Housing and Urban Development officials spent \$31,000 on a new dining room set for Secretary Ben Carson's office in late 2017 -- just as the White House circulated its plans to slash HUD's programs for the homeless, elderly and poor, according to federal procurement records. The purchase of the custom hardwood table, chairs and hutch came a month after a top agency staff member filed a whistle-blower complaint charging Mr. Carson's wife, Candy Carson, with pressuring department officials to find money for the expensive redecoration of his offices, even if it meant circumventing the law.

"Mr. Carson is also facing questions on another front. Under pressure earlier this month, he requested that HUD's inspector general investigate his son's involvement in a department-sponsored listening tour of Baltimore last summer. Department lawyers had warned Mr. Carson that including Ben Carson Jr., an entrepreneur who does business with the federal government, could create a conflict of interest. Mr. Carson 'didn't know the table had been purchased,' but does not believe the cost was too steep and does not intend to return it, said Raffi Williams, a HUD spokesman." <http://nyti.ms/2CqqDd0>

TRUMP'S AGENDA -- SHOCK! ... "Cornyn: Infrastructure bill may not happen this year," by Brianna Gurciullo: "President Donald Trump's \$1.5 trillion infrastructure plan may not pass Congress this year, a key GOP lawmaker said Tuesday - shortly before a Trump-backed proposal to split up the Federal Aviation Administration collapsed as well. Though expected, the two developments delivered major legislative blows for an administration that rolled into office banking on big populist wins on transportation.

"Sen. John Cornyn, the Senate Majority Whip, said today that passing an infrastructure bill by the end of the year will be a tough task because lawmakers are facing a host of other priorities - news that would be a major blow to President Donald Trump's hopes for another big legislative victory before the November midterm elections." <http://politi.co/2BXAcIR>

TRIAL BALLOON -- "Mnuchin Floats Rejoining Trans-Pacific Partnership, Trade Deal Trump Shelved," by NYT's Alan Rappeport: "More than a year after President Trump abruptly pulled out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, saying it was a bad deal for the United States, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Tuesday that the United States is discussing rejoining the multilateral trade agreement. Mr. Mnuchin, speaking at an investment summit meeting sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said that renegotiating the trade agreement was 'on the table' and that he had been in talks with other countries about what it would take for the United States to reverse course. ...

"I've met with several of my counterparties and other people, and we've begun to

have very high-level conversations about T.P.P.,' Mr. Mnuchin said, adding that Mr. Trump would still prefer to do one-on-one trade agreements first. 'It's not a priority at the moment, but it is something the president will consider.'" <http://nyti.ms/2HQX04g>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Fed's Powell Says His Economic Outlook Has Improved: Central-bank chief sees 'further gradual increases' in interest rates," by WSJ's David Harrison: "Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said the economy's prospects have brightened in recent months, indicating the central bank is on track to keep gradually lifting short-term interest rates and perhaps even pick up the pace this year. 'My personal outlook for the economy has strengthened since December,' he told members of the House Financial Services Committee on Tuesday in his first Capitol Hill appearance since taking over as Fed chief earlier this month." <http://on.wsj.com/2FDlugo>

-- **LISTEN IN: BEN WHITE** talks to **GLENN HUBBARD** about how Powell aced his first big test on Capitol Hill: <http://politi.co/2FaJ5aF>

THE LATEST ON RUSSIA ...

-- **"Sessions: Justice Department watchdog investigating GOP Russia memo claims,"** by Josh Gerstein: "Attorney General Jeff Sessions said Tuesday that the Justice Department's inspector general is looking into a House Republican memo's claim that prosecutors and FBI agents misled a federal judge when applying for warrants to surveil a Trump campaign adviser with ties to Moscow.

"In response to a question at a press conference about government anti-opioid efforts, Sessions appeared to confirm that the Justice Department is investigating the surveillance-related allegations leveled in the memo issued by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) and declassified on Feb. 2 at the order of President Donald Trump." <http://politi.co/2Fd3bkG>

-- **"Mueller team asks about Trump's Russian business dealings as he weighed a run for president,"** by CNN's Kara Scannell, Pamela Brown, Gloria Borger and Jim Sciutto: "Investigators for special counsel Robert Mueller have recently been asking witnesses about Donald Trump's business activities in Russia prior to the 2016 presidential campaign as he considered a run for president, according to three people familiar with the matter.

"Questions to some witnesses during wide-ranging interviews included the timing of Trump's decision to seek the presidency, potentially compromising information the Russians may have had about him, and why efforts to brand a Trump Tower in Moscow fell through, two sources said. The lines of inquiry indicate Mueller's team is reaching beyond the campaign to explore how the Russians might have sought to influence Trump at a time when he was discussing deals in Moscow and contemplating a presidential run." <http://cnn.it/2FBRoKk>

MORE ON MANAFORT -- "Manafort Joined Trump as Ukrainian Work Dried and Cash Woes Rose," by Bloomberg's David Voreacos and Stephanie Baker: "Manafort made 17 trips to Ukraine in 2014 and 2015, Ukrainian prosecutors who have records of his travel told Bloomberg. That work is more recent than the undisclosed lobbying activities Mueller has described in his indictments. That later work wasn't as profitable as earlier efforts in Ukraine, largely because Manafort's top Ukrainian client, former President Viktor Yanukovich, had by then fled to Russia ... Manafort didn't get paid for some of the work he did on Ukrainian elections in late 2015." <https://bloom.bg/2F2g6CL>

ABOUT THAT BRAD PARSCALE ROLLOUT -- AP's Zeke Miller and Jonathan Lemire: "The rollout of Parscale's announcement [as Trump's 2020 campaign manager] was not without a hitch. A statement released Tuesday by the Trump campaign attributed to White House senior adviser Jared Kushner was in apparent violation of federal law prohibiting the use of official titles in political work. The campaign used Kushner's title and his position as an 'assistant to the president' in its press release announcing Parscale's role. The title was removed from the copy of the release posted to the campaign website after questions from The Associated Press. The Hatch Act bars government employees from using their official titles in political work. Press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Tuesday all senior officials and Cabinet secretaries have been briefed on the prohibition." <http://bit.ly/2CMGkqH>

-- HMM: "Trump campaign chief lends name to penny stock tied to felon," by AP's Jeff Horwitz: "The political strategist and online guru who was named President Donald Trump's 2020 campaign manager Tuesday has a close financial relationship with a penny-stock firm with a questionable history that includes longstanding ties to a convicted fraudster, according to an Associated Press investigation. Brad Parscale, who played a key role in Trump's 2016 election victory, signed a \$10 million deal in August to sell his digital marketing company to CloudCommerce Inc.

"As part of the deal, Parscale currently serves as a member of California-based company's management team. The company touts itself as 'a global provider of cloud-driven e-commerce and mobile commerce solutions.' But records reviewed by the AP raise questions about its current financial picture and its rocky past. CloudCommerce's operations have not turned a profit in nearly a decade, the records indicate. The company's most recent quarterly earnings showed it has spent more than \$19 million in investor money since its creation nearly two decades ago and has only \$107,000 in cash on hand." <http://bit.ly/2oCfzAj>

THE JUICE ...

-- SPOTTED: IVANKA exiting the Georgetown neighborhood library yesterday ... **Gayle King** leaving the Cannon House Office Building yesterday afternoon - *pic* <http://bit.ly/2CpoKxf> -- She was also seen in first class on the 4 p.m. Acela Express from D.C. to NYC. ... **Lara Trump**, with a security detail, Tuesday afternoon in the Admirals Club at DCA.

-- REVOLVING DOOR: "Former Trump Adviser Dina Powell Is Returning to Goldman Sachs," by Bloomberg's Dakin Campbell and Jennifer Jacobs: "Dina Powell, a former deputy national security adviser to President Donald Trump, is returning to Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and will be a member of the investment bank's management committee. ... She'll focus on boosting relationships with sovereign clients, according to a memo sent to staff Tuesday. During her earlier stint at Goldman, which began in 2007, Powell ran the bank's '10,000 Women' initiative, focused on helping female entrepreneurs." <https://bloom.bg/2sZvjTr>

TRUMP'S WEDNESDAY -- The president and the first lady will attend the arrival ceremony for Billy Graham at the Capitol. In the afternoon, Trump will meet with lawmakers to discuss school safety.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: The Soyuz MS-06 spacecraft is seen as it starts to land with Expedition 54 crew members Joe Acaba and Mark Vande Hei of NASA and cosmonaut Alexander Misurkin near Dzhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, on Feb. 28. The three astronauts returned from the International Space Station, ending a 5 1/2-month mission. | NASA via AP Photo

#WOMENRULE -- ANNA talked with **RACHEL HOLT**, VP/regional general manager of U.S. and Canada at **UBER**, for the latest "Women Rule" podcast where they discussed everything from the company's less antagonistic approach in cities to how they are focused on treating women better at the company after CEO Travis Kalanick's departure. **Full story by producer Reena Flores** <http://politi.co/2GPZRck>

-- NEW PARTNERSHIP -- "Can millennial women decide the next election? A new collaboration between the Hive, theSkimm, and SurveyMonkey traces the interest, and likely impact, of female millennial voters in advance of the consequential 2018 midterms," by Vanity Fair's Maya Kosoff: <http://bit.ly/2CLRSEp>

SEXUAL HARASSMENT FILES -- SCOOP: "Cato board member faces spousal-abuse charge: The case against Preston Marshall, an associate of the Koch brothers, follows allegations of sexual harassment against the think tank's former president," by Maggie Severns and Daniel Lippman: "A board member at the libertarian Cato Institute is facing criminal charges of assaulting a family member in Texas, as his wife claims he held her down, choked her, head-butted her and bit her in the face, according to court documents of the May 2017 incident. Preston Marshall, a 44-year-old investor who was involved in high-profile lawsuits over his family's estate with Anna Nicole Smith, pleaded not guilty to assaulting his wife. His wife, Anastasia Marshall, has initiated divorce proceedings.

"[Preston] Marshall has been on the Cato board since 2012, when he was appointed with the support of Charles and David Koch, who are major Cato funders. ... Marshall's mother, Elaine Marshall, is the largest minority shareholder in Koch Industries ... is worth over \$16 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, [and] is currently a board member of Koch Industries." <http://politi.co/2GSLK6b> ... ***Daniel and Maggie's Feb. 8 story revealing sexual harassment allegations against ex-Cato President Ed Crane*** <http://politi.co/2ERcu70>

-- "Colorado Rep. Steve Lebsock faces expulsion after 11 sexual harassment allegations against him are deemed credible," by the Denver Post's John Frank and Jesse Paul: "For the first time in more than a century, the Colorado General Assembly will vote on whether to expel a lawmaker, a move that comes after five women made 11 credible accusations of sexual harassment against embattled Democratic state Rep. Steve Lebsock. ... If successful, Lebsock would be the second state legislator in the nation to be expelled since the rise of the #MeToo movement. Arizona ejected a lawmaker earlier this month. ... One claim involved an encounter with Rep. Faith Winter, D-Westminster, in which she alleges Lebsock discussed sexual acts and tried to grab her by the elbow and get her to leave a bar with him." <http://dpo.st/2t6loeU>

******* A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs: Medicare Part D is working for seniors .** An important part of the program's success comes from preferred pharmacy networks that promote quality and lower drug prices. Preferred pharmacy plans keep premiums low and are the most popular choice for seniors enrolled in Part D. But now, CMS is considering changes that would prevent seniors from choosing plans with preferred pharmacy networks. Tell CMS to stop proposed changes to Medicare Part D that would disrupt preferred pharmacy networks and hurt millions of seniors. [Learn more.](#) *****

REMEMBER THIS STORY? "GreenTech, the electric car company once led by McAuliffe, files for bankruptcy," by Richmond Times-Dispatch's Ned Oliver: "The electric car company founded by former Gov. Terry McAuliffe filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy this week, blaming in part a wave of negative coverage by a conservative news website for its financial woes.

"GreenTech Automotive's bankruptcy petition cites 76 articles by the website Watchdog.org it says 'negatively affected governmental, investor and public perception of GreenTech' and prompted investigations by the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Department of Homeland Security. GreenTech in 2013 sued Watchdog.org, operated by the Franklin Center for Government and Public Integrity, for \$85 million. A judge dismissed the case in 2014." <http://bit.ly/2GPYs5E>

MEDIAWATCH -- "N.Y. Times Exits Partnership With Tina Brown's Event Business," by the Hollywood Reporter's Jeremy Barr: "The company's 30 percent stake in Women in the World Media, LLC, was sold late last year for 'a nominal amount,' according to a filing. The New York Times quietly ended its partnership with Tina Brown's live events business last year, according to a disclosure filed Tuesday with the

[SEC] ... The transaction occurred in the third quarter of 2017." <http://bit.ly/2t1jXy6>

-- **DAVID FAHRENTHOLD**, a Washington Post political reporter, is now an NBC News and MSNBC political analyst. He made his debut last night on Nicolle Wallace's "Deadline: White House" and was also on "the Rachel Maddow Show." He previously was a CNN contributor.

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Wilbur and Hilary Ross having dinner and wine with Reince Priebus in a back corner table at Georgetown French restaurant Chez Billy Sud on Tuesday night.

OUT AND ABOUT -- EARLY ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATING ... Ambassador Daniel Mulhall and his wife Greta hosted a dinner with the Institute of Education last night at the Irish ambassador's residence to "celebrate Ireland's rich historical and contemporary links to the United States. Guests dined on smoked salmon and smoked trout with mango and lime salsa, sage-crusted rack of lamb, selection of Irish cheeses, pear poached in red wine with fresh raspberries and Irish soda bread ice cream."

SPOTTED: Kevin Hassett, OMB director Mick Mulvaney, Ambassador Sean Patrick Lawler, John Roberts, Kyra Phillips, Coach Kathy Kemper, Rep. Francis Rooney (R-Fla.), Kathleen Collins Rooney, Megan Smith, Chris Liddell, Katey Connelly, Ed Ingle and Vanessa Sindors.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Pete Williams, NBC News justice correspondent. **How he got his start in journalism:** "In my hometown of Casper, Wyoming, I started in radio, covering the city council and the school board. Or I could trace my entry to a neighborhood newspaper I started when I was eight years old. It was overpriced at three cents a copy." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2t6n87W>

BIRTHDAYS: Paul Krugman is 65 ... Politico senior politics editor Charlie Mahtesian ... Jack Abramoff is 6-0 (hat tip: Tim Burger) ... Ira Forman is 66 ... Miki King, VP of operations at WaPo ... Steven Chu is 7-0 ... Kristen Slaughter Brown ... CAP's Dr. Laura Durso ... Porter DeLaney, founding partner of the Kyle House Group ... Andrea Riccio, VP at S3 Public Affairs (h/t Amos Snead) ... John Nagl, headmaster of the Haverford School and former president of the Center for a New American Security ... Politico's Jay Morgan ... Kelsey Bloom, associate opinion editor at The Hill ... RNC's Christiana Purves (h/t Ryan Mahoney) ... Ken Blackwell is 7-0 ... Christine Simpson ... Pamela King, EnergyWire reporter at E&E News ... Christine Domenech ... Jessie Singleton Lazarus, MBA candidate at Harvard and former chief digital officer for NYC. She's celebrating with dinner with Ben (h/t Rowan Morris) ... Adam Sieff, litigation and trial associate at Latham & Watkins in LA ... Trey Cook ... Brendan S. Kelly, mobilization director at Alliance for Retired Americans, is 35 (h/t Conchita Cruz) ... Sandhya Taneja, a senior press intern in Sen. Schumer's D.C. office, is 23 (h/t Emma Eatman) ... Mark

Lippert, former U.S. Ambassador to Korea and now VP at Boeing International ...

... **WaPo's Sarah Ellison** ... AP's Lisa Lerer (h/t Annie Linskey) ... Erica Goldman of Purple Strategies ... conservative operatives Ned and Drew Ryun, twin sons of former Rep. Jim Ryun (R-Kan.) ... Lamar Echols, counsel for House Energy and Commerce committee and a Romney alum ... Judy Schneider, senior analyst at the Congressional Research Service ... Heather Sabharwal ... Edelman's Samantha Kruse ... Heather Fluit, comms director for Sen. Doug Jones (D-Ala.) ... Emily Krueger ... Reagan McGrath ... Enid Doggett ... Alicia Powe ... journalist Tom Hussain is 51 ... James Sullivan ... Wayne Lesperance ... Claire Francis ... Bruce Potter ... Leslie Aun, VP of comms. for passenger transportation company Keolis North America ... PwC's Li-Dor David ... Bush 43 WH alums Katie Riselli, Meghan Kielty and Darlene Ayers-Johnson ... Emily Sporn ... Michelle Brown ... Darcy Burke ... Rhea Lieber ... Wendy Goldberg ... architect Frank Gehry is 89 (h/t AP)

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs: Medicare Part D is working for seniors** . An important part of the program's success comes from preferred pharmacy networks that promote quality and lower drug prices. Preferred pharmacy plans keep premiums low and are the most popular choice for seniors enrolled in Part D. But now, CMS is considering changes that would prevent seniors from choosing plans with preferred pharmacy networks. Tell CMS to stop proposed changes to Medicare Part D that would disrupt preferred pharmacy networks and hurt millions of seniors. [Learn more](#). *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Freire, JP[Freire.JP@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]
From: Konkus, John
Sent: Sun 3/26/2017 2:11:07 PM
Subject: Re:

No mistake. Good work.

On Mar 26, 2017, at 10:10 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Yes. If that is a mistake, my apologies.

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 26, 2017, at 10:08 AM, Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov> wrote:

This is from the RNC's tv eyes?

On Mar 26, 2017, at 10:06 AM, EPA Jahan Wilcox <jahanwilcoxepa@gmail.com> wrote:

This Week (ABC) – EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt Interview

<http://mms.tveyes.com/transcript.asp?PlayClip=FALSE&DTSearch=TRUE&DateTime=03%2F26%2F2017>

SCOTT PRUITT: george, good morning.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: is the ek tech pif order coming this week? what will the president be proposing?

PRUITT: george, the president is keeping his promise to the american people. this week. with respect to the executive order coming down on tuesday. the energy independence executive order. we need a pro-groet and pro-environment approach. for too long, we have accepted a narrative that if you're pro-growth, pro-jobs, you're anti--environment. that's not where we have been as a country. we have made tremendous choices on our environment. the executive order will address the past administration's efforts to kill jobs throughout the country.

STEPHANOPOULOS: this order is likely to face legal challenges. coal jobs have been declining for a long time. we heard the president's promise. most of the job loss predates the obama initiative. the biggest drops came over a decade ago. you have about the same number of coal jobs now as you had a decade ago. are you worried that the president is making a promise that he just can't keep?

PRUITT: it's not just the short term, george. it's the long term. the past administration had a very anti-fossil fuel strategy. he's saying we can put people back to work and be pro-environment as well. his clean power plant is likely unlawful. there's been a stay against it. our action starting on tuesday, shortly after the executive order will make sure whatever steps we take in the future will be pro-growth, pro-environment. within the framework of the clean air act. it will be legal.

STEPHANOPOULOS: but will it bring back coal jobs?

PRUITT: i think absolutely it will. it will bring back manufacturing jobs, coal jobs across the country. across the energy sector, we have so much opportunity. the last administration wanted to keep it in the ground. we need to move more independent. this is an opportunity. this past week, the president approved the keystone pipeline. it's transportation issues. the jobs are across the economy.

STEPHANOPOULOS: if the president follows through on this and the order reverses vehicle pollution rules, there is no way to stay with the french agreement. the message they, the trump administration is sending to the rest of the world is that they don't believe climate change is serious. it's shocking to see such a degree of ignorance from the united states. your response?

PRUITT: george, we're actually at pre-1994 levels right now with respect to our co2 footprint. why is that? largely because of innovation and technology in the coal sector and the natural gas sector. horizontal drilling, much more conversion to natural gas to electricity. not just jobs will be created. it's lower electricity rates for consumers. when you take coal generation facilities, natural gas facilities and put them aside, it's causing double-digit increases across the country. it's not good on the consumer and manufacturing side.

STEPHANOPOULOS: i was asking about the paris climate agreement. don't these initiatives mean the agreement is a dead letter.

PRUITT: the paris accord is nonbinding. it was not a treaty, as such. the clean power plan is not tethered to the paris accords. this is an effort to undo the unlawful approach the previous administration engaged in and do it right going forward. with the mind set of being pro-growth and pro environment.

STEPHANOPOULOS: can we achieve the agreement of the paris climate agreement?

PRUITT: since 1980, a 65% reduction of -- we have done great work as a country striking the balance between jobs and our environment. the past administration took steps that were anti-jobs and rowth.

STEPHANOPOULOS: the california acted this week to tighten pollution standards. going in the opposite direction from what president trump is proposing. a headline from yesterday's "new york times." do you plan to let that stand?

PRUITT: what we should be doing. you mentioned the cafe standards. the last week and half, the president and i were in detroit announcing we were going to keep our word as a country to re-evaluate those in april 2018. we ought to focus on fuel efficiency for cars people want to buy. this process of building cars that no one purchases in order to meet these standards that were previously set is counterhelp counterhelpful. people don't buy the new cars. they keep older cars. we'll be evaluating that through spril of 2018. the cafe standard and the clean power plant and the executive order sends a message to the american people that we're going to do what we can to produce jobs and growth and be sensitive to the environment and reintroduce common sense into the discussion. you mentioned the pair accord. what was wrong with paris was not just that it was failed to be treated as a treaty. but china and india got away scot-free. they didn't have to take steps until 2030. we penalized ourselves through lost jobs while china and india didn't take steps to address the issue internationally. paris was just a bad deal, in my estimation. but, we're trying to focus on getting

thing right here domestically. operating within the frame work of the clean air act.

STEPHANOPOULOS: thank you for your time this trump

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 10/2/2017 10:31:25 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Koch Industries: BREAKING OVERNIGHT: MASSACRE IN LAS VEGAS ... More than 20 dead, 100 injured in mass shooting on strip -- SCOOP: Trump admin. to ask for another 10B plus in disaster relief -- GLASSER talks to Iran's Zarif

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Koch Industries

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](#)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](#)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](#))

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Driving the Day

MASSACRE ON THE LAS VEGAS STRIP: MORE THAN 20 DEAD, 100 INJURED IN MUSIC FESTIVAL SHOOTING -- LAS VEGAS SUN: "A gunman on the 32nd floor of a Las Vegas Strip casino opened fire Sunday on an outdoor music festival, killing at least 20 people -- including two off-duty police officers -- and wounding more than 100, authorities said.

"Officers confronted the suspect on the 32nd floor of Mandalay Bay, across the street from the concert, and he was killed, Clark County Sheriff Joseph Lombardo said. Authorities did not release the suspect's name but said he was a local resident. Lombardo said police believe it was a 'lone wolf' attack but said they were looking for a roommate of the dead suspect as a person of interest.

"Twenty-six people were admitted to the hospital, University Medical Center spokeswoman Danita Cohen said. Of those, at least two died, 12 were in critical condition and the rest were being evaluated, she said." <http://bit.ly/2g1JLRN> ... **42 pix from the Las Vegas Review-Journal** <http://bit.ly/2xNDoZW>

-- **@davidsakach:** "Video courtesy of Drew Akiohi. He was attending the concert at mandalay bay when shooting started." **2-min. video** <http://bit.ly/2ke0LZE> ... **1-min. video of the shooting and people fleeing** <http://bit.ly/2xRVWdv> ... **@SchreiberEvan:** "Harrowing video of mass shooting during @Jason_Aldean set of #Route91Harvest Festival in #LasVegas. #MandalayBay" -- **20-second video** <http://bit.ly/2x7Nvfr>

NBC NEWS is reporting the Las Vegas shooting suspect is Stephen Paddock, 64, of Mesquite, Nevada.

Good Monday morning -- a very scary start to the week. **SCOOP: MORE DISASTER MONEY** -- The Trump administration will ask Congress to approve another between \$10 billion and \$15 billion for the FEMA disaster relief fund this week, according to sources with knowledge of the request. We hear the magic number will be \$13 billion. This is meant to begin to cover the cost of the spate of recent natural disasters, including the storm in Puerto Rico.

ANNOUNCED THIS MORNING -- NOBEL PRIZE IN MEDICINE: Jeffrey C. Hall, Michael Rosbash, and Michael W. Young for "for their discoveries of molecular mechanisms controlling the circadian rhythm."

TROUBLE FOR TAX REFORM? -- NYT: "Republican Tax Plan May Not Be Built to Last," by Alan Rappeport: "Business leaders and conservative economists say a permanent reduction in the corporate tax rate, as opposed to a temporary, 10-year cut, is the best way to spur robust investment and job creation as well as generate the kind of economic growth Republicans say will pay for the tax plan.

"But a new analysis from the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center says the corporate tax cuts will cost nearly \$7 trillion over the next two decades -- \$2.6 trillion over the next 10 years and another \$4.1 trillion from 2028 through 2037. The hit would be somewhat offset by revenue raised from individual taxpayers over that same period -- \$470 billion over the next 10 years and an additional \$1.4 trillion the next decade. But the entire package is expected to cost an estimated \$5.6 trillion over the next 20 years -- an amount that economists say would be hard to offset through economic growth alone.

"The ability to pay for the tax cuts matters because of Senate rules requiring legislation that adds to the federal deficit after a decade to expire. If Republicans can't show that a long-term tax cut will be deficit-neutral, they will have to scale back the size of the corporate tax cuts, make them temporary or find another way to pay for them."

<http://nyti.ms/2fJdYsc>

-- REALITY CHECK: If the corporate rate moves from 20 percent, it will be a problem for tax reform. The Trump administration has signaled to Capitol Hill that 20 percent is its best and final offer.

SUSAN GLASSER TALKS TO ZARIF -- "Iran's Foreign Minister Has Some Things He Wants to Say to Donald Trump": "Despite President Donald Trump's threats to blow it up, the Iran nuclear deal still has a 'better than 50' percent chance of surviving the next year, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif told POLITICO in an extensive interview detailing how his country will-and won't-respond to Trump's extraordinary campaign against the agreement the American president calls 'an embarrassment to the United States.'

"Zarif called Trump's harsh attack on Iran in his recent U.N. speech 'the most insulting statement that had ever been made by any U.S. president against Iran since the Revolution.' But he said it has backfired, isolating the United States and undermining

its credibility 'as a reliable negotiating partner' on the world stage, and he vowed not to renegotiate the nuclear deal. If Trump tried to unravel it, Zarif said in the interview for The Global Politico, our weekly podcast on world affairs, Iran would consider everything from 'walking away from the deal to somehow accommodating Europe.' ...

"The Europeans have made it very clear to us and to the United States that they intend to do their utmost to ensure survival of the deal,' Zarif said, using some of his strongest public language yet for a series of backstage meetings that made clear what a striking gap Trump has opened up between the Americans and their closest allies."

<http://politi.co/2hHBJBo> ... **Full transcript** <http://politi.co/2g36Rrq> ... **Listen to the podcast** <http://apple.co/2kAoZfH>

DARREN SAMUELSON: "Robert Mueller has no comment": "Robert Mueller is rarely seen and almost never heard. He doesn't frequent popular restaurants, appear on television or even issue statements. When he meets in person with President Donald Trump's lawyers, he does not visit the White House where reporters might notice. He instead summons them to the conference rooms of his southwest Washington D.C. office, whose specific location is among his many well-guarded secrets.

"In those meetings and others, the special counsel investigating Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election strictly limits the number of outsiders who can attend. Militant about leaks, the former FBI director swears participants to a secrecy that they have honored to a remarkable degree. Reporters have long considered him among Washington's toughest nuts to crack: 'You'd be embarrassed to ask Bob Mueller for a leak,' said the veteran journalist Steven Brill, who has written extensively about media coverage of special counsels. 'It'd be like asking him to watch a porn movie with you.' ...

"But when a CNN crew chased him down a Senate hallway in June 00 'The president thinks it's a 'witch hunt.' Is there any way you can respond to that?' -- the poker-faced G-man just stared ahead and kept walking. The moment illustrated the strange dynamic of Mueller's mission. He is leading a highly secretive investigation into a president who publicly criticizes the probe on a regular basis. It also underscored what former colleagues, fellow prosecutors and people close to the investigation call Mueller's calculated effort, in the face of a president who has contemplated his firing, to make himself as small a part of the story as possible." <http://politi.co/2fl4BJ5>

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BULLETIN at 6 a.m.: "HAVANA (AP) - AP sources: US spies working under diplomatic cover in Havana among the first and most severely affected by attacks." **Story** <http://bit.ly/2xMTKIE>

THE LATEST ON PUERTO RICO ...

-- **"San Juan mayor in hurricane spotlight after Trump tweets,"** by AP's Danica Coto in San Juan: "In Puerto Rico's hurricane-ravaged capital, it seems Carmen Yulin Cruz is everywhere these days: handing out bags of ice, wading through chest-deep floodwaters, hugging people in need of comfort. Cruz has long won attention across the island for her hands-on style of leadership in San Juan. But this week she rose to international prominence as a target of Twitter attacks by U.S. President Donald Trump - including one tweet Sunday calling her and others 'politically motivated ingrates.' ... A graduate of Boston University and Carnegie Mellon, she is also a former member of the island's House of Representatives." <http://bit.ly/2x77rih>

-- **POOL REPORT DU JOUR - AFP's Michael Mathes**, quoting Trump at the Presidents Cup golf tournament in Jersey City, New Jersey: "'On behalf of all of the people of Texas, and... if you look today and you see what's happening, how horrible it is but we have it under really great control, Puerto Rico. And the people of Florida who have really suffered over this last period of time with the hurricanes,' Trump said before presenting the trophy to US captain Steve Stricker. 'I want to just remember them, and we're going to dedicate this trophy to all those people who went through so much, that we love, that are part of our great state, really a part of our great nation,' Trump said. Back to golf: 'Our team USA -- wow did you play well.'"

THE PRINT EXCLUSIVE -- TIM ALBERTA of POLITICO MAGAZINE speaks to **STEVE SCALISE -- "'They Said I Was Within a Minute of Death'"**
<http://politi.co/2wtfYb0>

OVERSEAS -- "U.S. Weighs Fate of Taliban Political Office, Prompting Internal Objection," by WSJ's Dion Nissenbaum: "The Trump administration is considering a plan that would aim to close the Taliban political office in Qatar, a move that triggered an unusual internal protest by State Department officials who said it would undermine U.S. interests in Afghanistan, according to current and former U.S. officials. A group of State Department specialists on South Asia filed the rare internal 'dissent channel cable' on Friday to urge that the U.S. keep the Taliban office open and launch more-intensive talks to end the 16-year-old war in Afghanistan ... The memo was signed by a handful of officials ... including some longtime State Department employees whose contracts with the department expired on Friday and weren't renewed." <http://on.wsj.com/2x8Dfyy>

-- **FT: "Catalonian president close to declaring independence: More than 760 people injured in clashes as Catalans defy Madrid over vote,"** by Michael Stothard in Barcelona and Ian Mount in Girona: "Catalonia's president has signalled that the region is on course to declare independence from Spain in the coming days after more than 2m people defied attempts by Madrid to halt Sunday's referendum to back independence.

"Carles Puigdemont said that the region's citizens had 'earned the right to have an independent state' after 90 per cent of the 2.26m votes cast -- out of just over 5m

eligible voters -- were in favour of independence. 'My government, in the next few days, will send the results of today's vote to the Catalan parliament, where the sovereignty of our people lies,' he said. The parliament had previously promised independence within 48 hours of a Yes vote. A declaration of independence would have no legal force, as the Spanish constitutional court has ruled the referendum illegal and invalid. Such a declaration was also likely to have no backing from the international community."

<http://on.ft.com/2fK7FEq>

ALEX BURNS in NYT MEN'S STYLE SECTION: "Zippy Amtrak Train Gets Tangled in 'the Swamp'": "Sebastian Gorka's voice rippled with contempt as he announced, on behalf of Donald J. Trump, that the old Washington establishment was obsolete. Declaring it was time for 'new ideas,' Mr. Gorka, then a White House aide, packed disdain into a cryptic phrase that could have been borrowed from science fiction - a space-age update on the Bolsheviks' 'dustbin of history.' 'We're not going to stay in the Washington bubble,' Mr. Gorka proclaimed on television, 'or the Acela corridor of wonkery.' With its Asimovian name, wielded these days as a vaguely derisive epithet, the Acela might sound to an untrained ear like something exotic, even menacing. The reality is far more pedestrian: The Acela is a train." <http://nyti.ms/2wsZgIR>

TRUMP'S MONDAY -- Trump is meeting with governors from Kentucky, Mississippi, Maine and New Hampshire. He is also holding a working lunch with Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and holding a dinner with GOP lawmakers.

THE JUICE ...

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: RANDY BRYCE** raised more than \$1.5 million in the third quarter for his bid to oust Speaker Paul Ryan, according to a release provided in advance to Playbook. The campaign will also report more than \$1 million cash-on-hand in a finance report due later this month. The average contribution to his campaign was \$25.

-- **"Republican AGs hire Ryan operative for 2018 build-up,"** by Scott Bland: "Zack Roday, who has been the press secretary and spokesman for House Speaker Paul Ryan's political operation, will become the Republican Attorneys General Association's first-ever communications director." <http://politi.co/2ws3IHL>

-- **David Freedlander (@freedlander)**: "NEWS: former Trump campaign aide Michael Caputo has joined Michael Grimm's campaign for Congress".

CUBS-NATIONALS SCHEDULE -- Friday, Nationals Park, 7:30 p.m., TBS ... Saturday, Nationals Park, 5:30 p.m., TBS

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Police officers stand at the scene of a shooting near the Mandalay Bay resort and casino on the Las Vegas Strip on Oct. 1. Officials say at least 20 people were killed and over 100 were injured. | John Locher/AP Photo

FOR YOUR RADAR -- AP at 5:53 a.m.: "BEIT LAHIYA, Gaza Strip (AP) - Palestinian prime minister arrives in Gaza for ambitious attempt to reconcile rival Palestinian factions."

FOGGY BOTTOM WATCH -- "Should Rex Tillerson Resign? The president has yet again humiliated his secretary of state. Here's why it probably doesn't matter whether he stays or goes," by Aaron David Miller and Richard Sokolosky in POLITICO Magazine: "In our combined 50-plus years at the State Department, neither of us ever witnessed as profound a humiliation as a sitting president handed his secretary of state Sunday morning. ... Even if they're playing good cop-bad cop, this is a shocker: Donald Trump is basically announcing that any negotiations with North Korea are worthless.

"This not only undercut Tillerson personally, but also undermines U.S. interests and the secretary of state's sensible decision to talk to the North Korean regime. To make matters worse, all of this is occurring while Tillerson is in Beijing to prepare for the president's trip to China next month-so the president kneecapped his own top diplomat in front of America's chief rival in Asia." <http://politi.co/2yDfT5b>

ON THE WORLD STAGE -- "Kim Jong Un's Nephew Was in Danger After Father's Killing, North Korean Group Says," by WSJ's Alastair Gale: "When Kim Jong Nam, the exiled half brother of North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un, was killed with nerve gas in a Malaysian airport on Feb. 13, it was evident who might be targeted next. His 21-year-old son, Kim Han Sol, had similarly criticized the regime in Pyongyang, which was suspected of carrying out the attack. The son's bloodline made him a potential threat to the Kim dynasty. What followed was a secretive scramble by a group of North Korean dissidents to get Kim Han Sol, his mother and sister out of their Macau home and fly them to safety in a secure location. ...

"The U.S., China and the Netherlands provided assistance with travel, visas or other aspects of the plan, according to the group. ... Other nations refused to give assistance. Among them was Canada, a decision that reflected its sensitive negotiations to free a Canadian pastor imprisoned in North Korea." <http://on.wsj.com/2xUUKXe>

-- "2 women plead not guilty in N. Korean scion's assassination," by AP's Eileen Ng in Shah Alam, Malaysia: "Two women accused of fatally poisoning the estranged half brother of North Korea's ruler pleaded not guilty as their trial began Monday in Malaysia's High Court, nearly eight months after the brazen airport assassination that sparked a diplomatic standoff. Siti Aisyah of Indonesia and Doan Thi Huong of Vietnam are suspected of smearing Kim Jong Nam's face with the banned VX nerve agent on Feb. 13 at a crowded airport terminal in Kuala Lumpur, killing him within about 20

minutes. The women say they thought they were playing a harmless prank for a hidden-camera show." <http://bit.ly/2fJMq63>

-- "A North Korean ship was seized off Egypt with a huge cache of weapons destined for a surprising buyer," by WaPo's Joby Warrick: "Last August, a secret message was passed from Washington to Cairo warning about a mysterious vessel steaming toward the Suez Canal. The bulk freighter named Jie Shun was flying Cambodian colors but had sailed from North Korea, the warning said, with a North Korean crew and an unknown cargo shrouded by heavy tarps. Armed with this tip, customs agents were waiting when the ship entered Egyptian waters. They swarmed the vessel and discovered, concealed under bins of iron ore, a cache of more than 30,000 rocket-propelled grenades.

"It was, as a United Nations report later concluded, the 'largest seizure of ammunition in the history of sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.' But who were the rockets for? The Jie Shun's final secret would take months to resolve and would yield perhaps the biggest surprise of all: The buyers were the Egyptians themselves." <http://wapo.st/2keecsM>

******* A message from Koch Industries:** According to the World Health Organization, 633 million people lack access to safe water worldwide. At Koch, we are addressing this global crisis with innovative membrane filtration technologies to help turn surface and wastewater back into clean drinking water. It's already making a difference in places such as São Paulo, Brazil, one of the world's largest cities. This is one of the many challenges that our more than 70,000 employees across America are working on each day. From water and agriculture, to renewable fuels, energy efficiency and other advancements that help people improve their lives, our team members are encouraged to think like entrepreneurs and challenge the status quo. Here, everyone is encouraged to speak up with ideas to create greater long-term value for society, our customers and businesses, while also reducing waste so more natural resources are available to meet future needs. Go behind the scenes at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

VALLEY TALK - NEW YORK MAGAZINE COVER -- "Does Even Mark Zuckerberg Know What Facebook Is? The same company that gives you birthday reminders also helped ensure the integrity of the German elections," by Max Read: "Facebook has grown so big, and become so totalizing, that we can't really grasp it all at once. Like a four-dimensional object, we catch slices of it when it passes through the three-dimensional world we recognize. In one context, it looks and acts like a television broadcaster, but in this other context, an NGO. ... Over the past year I've heard Facebook compared to a dozen entities and felt like I've caught glimpses of it acting like a dozen more. I've heard government metaphors (a state, the E.U., the Catholic Church, Star Trek's United Federation of Planets) and business ones (a railroad company, a mall); physical metaphors (a town square, an interstate highway, an electrical grid) and economic ones (a Special Economic Zone, Gosplan).

"For every direct comparison, there was an equally elaborate one: a faceless Elder

God. A conquering alien fleet. There are real consequences to our inability to understand what Facebook is. Not even President-Pope-Viceroy Zuckerberg himself seemed prepared for the role Facebook has played in global politics this past year. In which case, how can we be assured that Facebook is really safeguarding democracy for us and that it's not us who need to be safeguarding democracy against Facebook?"

<http://slct.al/2xQYR61> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2x9M3E6>

--"**AP source: Facebook to turn over Russia-linked ads,**" by AP's Mary Clare Jalonick: "Social media giant Facebook is expected to provide Congress on Monday with more than 3,000 ads that ran around the time of the 2016 presidential election and are linked to a Russian ad agency. Company officials will meet with the House and Senate intelligence committees and the Senate Judiciary Committee to hand over the ads ... It is unclear whether the ads will eventually be released publicly. Several lawmakers - including Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence panel - have said they believe the American public should see them."

<http://bit.ly/2x9w6hn>

KNOWING ERIC TRUMP -- "THE PRESIDENT'S SON: HOW ERIC BECAME A TRUMP," by City and State New York's Frank Runyeon: <http://bit.ly/2xUSpLY>

MEDIAWATCH -- RACHEL MADDOW PROFILE -- "The Storyteller: How Rachel Maddow constructs a narrative," by The New Yorker's Janet Malcolm: "Maddow is widely praised for the atmosphere of cheerful civility and accessible braininess that surrounds her stage persona. She is onstage, certainly, and makes no bones about being so. She regularly reminds us of the singularity of her show ('You will hear this nowhere else'; 'Very important interview coming up, stay with us'; 'Big show coming up tonight'). Like a carnival barker, she leads us on with tantalizing hints about what is inside the tent ...

"Her performance and those of the actors in the commercials merge into one delicious experience of TV. 'The Rachel Maddow Show' is a piece of sleight of hand presented as a cable news show. It is TV entertainment at its finest. It permits liberals to enjoy themselves during what may be the most thoroughly unenjoyable time of their political lives." <http://bit.ly/2x9mDqp>

-- "**Google Plans to Help News Publishers Increase Subscriptions:** Search engine to end 'first click free' policy that upset industry; new subscription tools in works," by WSJ's Jack Nicas: "Google is rolling out a package of new policies and services to help news publishers increase subscriptions, a move likely to warm its icy relationship with some of the biggest critics of its power over the internet." <http://on.wsj.com/2xKTICU>

-- **CLICKER - VANITY FAIR:** "The New Establishment: In 2017 it seems that everyone is in everyone else's business, and the list foreshadows the coming battles as various industries, and the titans who captain them, increasingly weave together into one." **The full list** <http://bit.ly/2fCXAFt>

Playbookers



<http://bit.ly/2yCm2yK> ... *Instapic*

<http://bit.ly/2fDVVQo>

-- **Eric Koch**, a managing principal in the New York office of Precision Strategies and alum of Melissa Mark-Viverito and Hiltzik Strategies, on Saturday married **Sonia Moghe**, a field producer in New York for CNN. Pool report: "It was an outdoor, beachfront Hindu wedding in Cape Cod along the Nantucket Sound at sunset. Eric rode in on a horse, as is customary in Hindu weddings, and afterwards the couple did their first dance to 'Teenage Dream' by Katy Perry. They handed out bottles of Bovis Olive Oil, from Eric's family's olive orchard in Kalamata, Greece, and dined on Greek and Indian food." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2yRoCBx> ... **Eric on a horse** <http://bit.ly/2xLZSKV> ... **NYT announcement** <http://nyti.ms/2xJGQHE>

SPOTTED: Sara Sidner, Amelia Adams, Lis Smith, Max Pomeranc, Naeem Douglas.

-- API's tax lobbyist and HungryLobbyist.com owner **Brian Johnson** on Saturday married 1776's director of marketing **Morgan Gress** at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in D.C. "It's not lost that a tax lobbyist got married on Sept. 30, the end of the fiscal year, days after the tax reform blueprint 2.0 was released, with a reception at the home of the President (Woodrow Wilson) who was responsible for codifying the modern day tax code, with koozies that read 'Joint Tax Filing Ceremony' with the code section for married couples jointly filing," a tipster emailed us. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2xRIhTB> ... <http://bit.ly/2yBhnwI>

SPOTTED: Surya Gunasekara and wife Mandy Gunasekara, who played the piano during the wedding ceremony, Patrick Gleason, Peter Cherukuri, Andrew Mills, Page Gress, Ashley Summers, Nika Nour, Georgette Spanjich, Ashley Wolos, Kate Nolan.

IN MEMORIAM -- Family and friends gathered to remember GOP pollster and strategist Arthur Finkelstein Sunday at his family's estate in Ipswich, Mass. The gathering was

hosted by his husband and partner of 51 years, Donald Curiale, and his daughters Molly and Jeni, with surviving brothers Ronald and Barry Finkelstein. Beth Myers emceed with other speakers including Ari Fleischer, JoAnne Barnhart, former Sens. Al D'Amato (R-N.Y.) and Connie Mack (R-Fla.), former Republican N.Y. Gov. George Pataki, David Cornstein, Barbara Fiala and Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, who flew in from Tirana.

"All celebrated Finkelstein's genius, skill, humor, and famous quirks (untied necktie, dinners at Peter Luger's, and trademark greeting regardless of time, 'Good Morning')," one attendee emailed us. "Messages read from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat. Retrospective video produced by (Trump media man) Larry Weitzner and Niles Barnhart."

TRANSITIONS - MediaDC has hired **Jillian Anderson** as associate publicist. She previously worked as a network booker for Newsy and is a Fox News alum. ... **Brandt Anderson** is leaving as legislative director for Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.) and joining Texas GOP Sen. Ted Cruz's office handling his Senate Armed Services Cmte./Defense and veterans policy work.

BIRTHDAYS OF THE DAY: Dave Walker, candidate for Connecticut governor and former comptroller general of the U.S. and head of the GAO, is 66. **A fun fact about him:** "I'm in two Halls of Fame: the Accounting Hall of Fame which is international and in Columbus, Ohio and the Internal Audit Hall of Fame in Orlando, Florida. A second fun fact is I used to work for the Miami Dolphins when I was in high school. I probably had the best high school job in America. I did statistics, did bed checks and issued fines if the players were late and I did whatever the head coach and Bob Griese wanted me to do. Griese was the quarterback for the undefeated Super Bowl team, although when I was with the Dolphins, it was in their formative years, not their undefeated Super Bowl year." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2g2QRpd>

-- **Barry Bennett**, president of Avenue Strategies, former senior adviser to the Trump campaign and former Carson campaign manager. **How he got his start in politics:** "I needed a job in college and a cute girl next door got me an interview at the Reagan campaign in Ohio. The rest was a series of poor personnel decisions by others." **Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2xNgn9B>

BIRTHDAYS: Cathy Isaacson ... Courtney Hazlett ... Doug Andres, press secretary for White House press corps for Speaker Ryan, is 33 (hat tip: his future fellow podcast stars) ... N.Y. Republican State Chairman Ed Cox is 71 ... Politico's Lindsey Mertz ... John Donnelly, COS for Rep. Tom Graves (R-Ga.) ... Marlena (Baldacci) Militana, CNN alum now at Highwire PR in Chicago ... AP auto writer Tom Krisher is 6-0 ... Alex Fullman ... Michelle Sara King, president and CEO of King Consults, celebrating with a friends at Emissary ... Rep. Hank Johnson (D-Ga.) is 63 ... Bloomberg's Lisa Fleisher ... NYT's Lynsea Garrison ...

... **Bloomberg's David Gura** ... Rosie Quick ... Greg Scanlon ... Danita Ng ... Annie

Keating ... Emerson Eichler of Wells Fargo ... Joey Kalmin ... NYPIRG leader Blair Horner ... Ken Bazinet ... GOP fundraiser Mackenzie Smith ... Deanna Ballard ... Lauren Belive, federal gov't relations at Lyft and an Obama WH and OFA alum ... Susan Lamorra ... Lauren Pfeifle Willis ... Minhas Majeed Khan ... Jacklin Rhoads, press secretary for Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa.) ... Shelley Fryer ... Julie Burton ... David Wilhelm is 61 ... Emmett Beliveau (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Koch Industries:** The Global Harvest Initiative estimates that the world's population will grow to 9 billion by the year 2050. Until then, the challenge is to find better ways to grow twice as much food on roughly the same amount of land that is used for farming today. At Koch, our scientists explore new natural ways to boost crop performance by harnessing tiny soil microbes that stimulate plant improvements and yield. This is one of the many challenges that our more than 70,000 employees across America work on each day. From agriculture and renewable fuels to energy efficiency and other advancements that help people improve their lives, our team members are encouraged to think like entrepreneurs and challenge the status quo. Here, everyone is encouraged to speak up with ideas to improve efficiency, reduce waste, and create greater long-term value for society, our customers and businesses. Go behind the scenes at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

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Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Bennett, Tate[Bennett.Tate@epa.gov]; Lyons, Troy[lyons.troy@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 6:47:10 PM
Subject: Re: From the Weekly Standard

Except this part is not the case. Definers is doing this on their own, not at anyone's direction.

In other words, rather than simply fire or demote employees who undermine the agency's leadership, EPA administrator Scott Pruitt's team sought to document the times when these activities took place while the employees were at work.

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 18, 2017, at 12:33 PM, Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov> wrote:

Follow up: <http://www.weeklystandard.com/editorial-theres-no-scandal-at-the-epa/article/2010883>

Editorial: There's No Scandal at the EPA

“Another entry from the authoritarian handbook,” says David Axelrod. MSNBC's Chris Hayes thinks it's a “hunt” for “ideological subversives.” The public is financing “lies” to “eviscerate environmental protections,” according to Robert Reich.

Liberals accuse their adversaries of fascism pretty regularly these days, so you likely have no idea what is worrying these lefty grandees. To be specific: Over the weekend the *New York Times* published a story about the Environmental Protection Agency hiring a public relations firm to investigate “agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.” A vice president of the firm, Definers Public Affairs, explains it to the *Times* straightforwardly: they were asked to look into whether EPA employees “were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this.”

In order to discover if employees were engaging in “resistance” activities on the clock, Designers submitted Freedom of Information requests to the agency about the employees. In other words, rather than simply fire or demote employees who undermine the agency’s leadership, EPA administrator Scott Pruitt’s team sought to document the times when these activities took place while the employees were at work.

There is no scandal here. The lawfully appointed head of an agency has every right to find out if employees are actively undercutting his mission and getting paid to do so. Pruitt is loathed by the environmental militants inside the EPA (to understand why, read Fred Barnes’s feature story in the December 25 WEEKLY STANDARD). The use of FOIA requests is an open and lawful way to deal with those who aren’t simply voicing legitimate policy differences but actually impairing the agency’s director. Definers only used public information to file its requests, not internal documents (an important point ignored by the *Times* in both the original story and a follow-up). That Pruitt’s team dealt with the problem of internal opposition not by secret purges but by use of open-records requests shows a reverence for transparency and the rule of law. If an “authoritarian” regime wanted to “hunt down ideological subversives,” it wouldn’t use FOIA requests. It would just fire them.

The *Times* is viscerally hostile to Pruitt, and it is hardly surprising that one of its reporters would find a scandal where there is nothing of the sort. Surely a reporter who claims in his Twitter bio that “transparency matters a lot to me” might have stopped to consider this obvious point. But for our paper of record, too often “transparency” only matters when it yields the right kind of political results.

From: Bowman, Liz

Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 4:27 AM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Bennett, Tate <Bennett.Tate@epa.gov>; Lyons, Troy <lyons.troy@epa.gov>

Subject: Fwd: From the Weekly Standard

Full article

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tue 11/7/2017 2:42:22 PM
Subject: FOR APPROVAL/EPA Morning News Highlights 11.7.17
EPA Morning News Highlights 11.7.17.docx

EPA Morning News Highlights 11.7.17

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The Washington Examiner: EPA slow-walks decisions on who can't meet ozone rules

The Environmental Protection Agency isn't saying which areas of the country are not complying with the Obama administration's 2015 national air quality standards for smog-forming ozone just yet. "The ozone designation process is complex and requires ongoing and extensive conversations with state and local agencies," said EPA administrator Scott Pruitt. "As we move forward, the agency will be able to prioritize, be more responsive to local needs, and move forward on a case-by-case basis." The Environmental Protection Agency isn't saying which areas of the country are not complying with the Obama administration's 2015 national air quality standards for smog-forming ozone just yet.

The Daily Caller: Enviros Freak Out After Trump Officials Push Coal Agenda During UN Climate Talks

Officials attending a UN climate change conference are livid that officials with the Trump administration are using the talk to hype up how fossil fuels can help reduce global warming. An adviser to President Donald Trump is expected to take part in a pro-coal presentation during the so-called COP23 conference in Bonn, Germany. Participants believe it's "beyond absurd" to champion fossil fuels at an event designed to brainstorm solutions to climate change. "It is undeniable that fossil fuels will be used for the foreseeable future, and it is in everyone's interest that they be efficient and clean," a White House spokesman told reporters Monday, referring to Trump's efforts to promote fossil fuels at the G20 meeting this year.

The Daily Signal: We Hear You: A 'Positive,' 'Encouraging' Interview With EPA Chief Scott Pruitt

Dear Daily Signal: What an outstanding interview. I'm so encouraged. Rob Bluey asked relevant, important questions, and Scott Pruitt's responses actually went to the issues ("Trump's EPA Chief Charts a New Course: An Interview With Scott Pruitt"). It's good information for the American people to know, that our Environmental Protection Agency administrator actually has a well-conceived plan and is working diligently to carry it out. I wish you would do similar

interviews with other Cabinet-level officials, such as Dr. Ben Carson at HUD. I read The Daily Signal every day, and appreciate the good coverage. It truly helps me to know our government and what is happening on the political scene. You are to be commended for asking questions that get to the heart of the issues, then giving Pruitt time and space to give meaningful answers.—Roger Pritchett

Charleston Gazette-Mail: EPA right to plan for hearing in WV

You may remember that when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was holding hearings on its Clean Power Plan, the agency was at pains to avoid giving people in coal states opportunities to comment. The 2015 hearings were held in Atlanta, Denver, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C. Now, the EPA is planning to rescind the Clean Power Plan, and hearings are scheduled on that. One of them will be in Charleston on Nov. 28-29. Good for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for insisting that people affected by his agency's plans will have opportunities to comment on them. It's about time.

National Morning News Highlights 11.7.17

The Associated Press: In Seoul, Trump calls for North Korea to 'make a deal'

In a striking shift of tone, President Donald Trump abandoned his aggressive rhetoric toward North Korea on Tuesday, signaling a willingness to negotiate as he urged Pyongyang to "come to the table" and "make a deal." Trump, in his first day on the Korean peninsula, again pushed Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons program, but sounded an optimistic note, saying confidently, if vaguely, "ultimately, it'll all work out." And while he said the United States would use military force if needed, he expressed his strongest inclination yet to deal with rising tensions with Pyongyang through diplomacy. "It makes sense for North Korea to come to the table and make a deal that is good for the people of North Korea and for the world," Trump said during a news conference alongside South Korean president Moon Jae-in. "I do see certain movement."

Fox News: Saudi Arabia calls missile launch 'act of war' by Iran, vows retaliation

Saudi Arabia on Monday called the attempted missile attack on Riyadh's main airport this weekend an "act of war" by Iran and vowed to retaliate. Houthi rebels in Yemen, who have been fighting Saudi-backed forces there for several years, claimed responsibility for firing the ballistic missile on Saturday. The missile traveled more than 500 miles before Saudi Arabia intercepted it. The official Saudi Press Agency charged that debris from the missile proved that it was made in Iran and smuggled into Yemen. American officials have previously charged that Iran has armed the Houthi rebels. The attempted missile strike was "a blatant act of military aggression by the

Iranian regime and could rise to be considered as an act of war," the Saudi Press Agency said in a statement.

Reuters: Chinese fans prepare to welcome rich, powerful, 'free-spirit' Trump

He may be a divisive figure back home, but U.S. President Donald Trump will be landing in friendly territory when he arrives in Beijing on Wednesday, judging by Chinese social media. On platforms such as the Twitter-like Sina Weibo, Trump's Chinese supporters, who admire his business success and a free-wheeling style unconstrained by political correctness, are far more prominent than detractors. While no comprehensive survey has been done to assess the size and intensity of Trump's popularity in China, several pundits suggest he has broad and vocal support. "Chinese people are impressed that he is extremely rich, he loves things splendid and magnificent, and he loves to show off. Not every billionaire is like that," said Yin Hao, who translates American news and comedy clips for his nearly one million followers on Weibo.

Reuters: Hard-fought Virginia governor's race to test Trump's clout

A bitterly fought governor's race in Virginia leads a slate of state and local elections on Tuesday that offer an early test of President Donald Trump's political influence and possible strategies for both parties in next year's midterm elections. New Jersey voters also will pick a new governor to replace outgoing Republican Chris Christie. Several big cities will select mayors and conservative Utah will hold a special election to replace U.S. Representative Jason Chaffetz, a Republican who stepped down before his term ended. The marquee contest is in Virginia, where polls show Democrat Ralph Northam has a slight edge over Republican Ed Gillespie in a nasty governor's race that will offer clues about the country's political mood. Gillespie, a Washington lobbyist and former Republican National Committee chairman, has kept his distance from Trump but embraced the president's combative campaign style with hard-edged ads hitting Northam on divisive issues such as immigration, gang crime and Confederate statues.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-slow-walks-decisions-on-who-cant-meet-ozone-rules/article/2639820>

EPA slow-walks decisions on who can't meet ozone rules

By John Siciliano, 11/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency isn't saying which areas of the country are not complying with the Obama administration's 2015 national air quality standards for smog-forming ozone just yet.

"The ozone designation process is complex and requires ongoing and extensive conversations with state and local agencies," said EPA administrator Scott Pruitt. "As we move forward, the agency will be able to prioritize, be more responsive to local needs, and move forward on a case-by-case basis."

The EPA is required under the Clean Air Act to designate non-attainment areas of the country under the ozone rule by Oct. 1. These are areas of the country that cannot meet the regulations. Once the non-attainment areas are designated, the clock begins to tick down for states to develop and submit plans for meeting that standards.

Manufacturing and business groups had argued the original version of the updated ozone regulations would place much of the country in non-attainment, stifling heavy industry, and energy development. Critics say even pristine national parks would not be able to meet the standard.

EPA's final regulation was less strict, but industry and states continue to argue they have yet to comply with the previous 2008 ozone standards. A GOP-backed bill on Capitol Hill looks to block the 2015 rules from going into effect until states have met the previous rules.

The Trump EPA argues it is following the law in implementing the ozone standard, though it missed the Oct. 1 deadline. It is doing so by designating those areas that are in compliance with the ozone rules before moving on to the non-attainment areas, according to the agency.

"Consistent with states' and tribes' recommendations, EPA finds that most areas of the country — 2,646 of the more than 3,100 counties in the United States -- meet the standards for ground-level ozone," the agency said Monday. "These areas do not have any increased compliance burdens."

EPA continues to examine how other areas are "meeting attainment thresholds," saying peer-reviewed science indicates "international emissions and background ozone" can result in higher ozone pollution levels, suggesting it will seek to account for those distortions before making final assessments.

"The agency intends to address these areas in a separate future action."

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/11/06/enviros-freak-out-after-trump-officials-push-coal-agenda-during-un-climate-talks/>

Enviros Freak Out After Trump Officials Push Coal Agenda During UN Climate Talks

By Chris White, 11/6/17

Officials attending a UN climate change conference are livid that officials with the Trump administration are using the talk to hype up how fossil fuels can help reduce global warming.

An adviser to President Donald Trump is expected to take part in a pro-coal presentation during the so-called COP23 conference in Bonn, Germany. Participants believe it's "beyond absurd" to champion fossil fuels at an event designed to brainstorm solutions to climate change.

"It is undeniable that fossil fuels will be used for the foreseeable future, and it is in everyone's interest that they be efficient and clean," a White House spokesman told reporters Monday, referring to Trump's efforts to promote fossil fuels at the G20 meeting this year.

Activists were not buying that position.

“Fossil fuels having any role in tackling climate change is beyond absurd. It is dangerous,” Andrew Norton, director of the International Institute for Environment and Development, told reporters about Trump’s reasoning. The conference is “no place for pushing the fossil fuel agenda,” he said, adding that the White House must pitch a more realistic approach.

U.S. carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, meanwhile, have fallen about 12 percent since 2005, due primarily to the increased production of natural gas production from hydraulic fracturing, according to a report earlier this year from the Energy Information Administration (EIA).

EIA’s report attributes falling CO₂ emissions to “decreased use of coal and the increased use of natural gas for electricity generation.” Natural gas emits about half the CO₂ of coal power and is already cheaper than coal in many locations due to fracking.

The Daily Signal

<http://dailysignal.com/2017/11/05/we-hear-you-a-positive-encouraging-interview-with-epa-chief-scott-pruitt/>

We Hear You: A ‘Positive,’ ‘Encouraging’ Interview With EPA Chief Scott Pruitt

By Ken McIntyre, 11/5/17

Editor’s note: The Daily Signal’s audience found much to like in an interview of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt conducted by Rob Bluey, our editor-in-chief. Today we focus on that among other environmental matters. Be sure to write us at letters@dailysignal.com.—Ken McIntyre

Dear Daily Signal: What an outstanding interview. I’m so encouraged. Rob Bluey asked relevant, important questions, and Scott Pruitt’s responses actually went to the issues (“Trump’s EPA Chief Charts a New Course: An Interview With Scott Pruitt”).

It's good information for the American people to know, that our Environmental Protection Agency administrator actually has a well-conceived plan and is working diligently to carry it out. I wish you would do similar interviews with other Cabinet-level officials, such as Dr. Ben Carson at HUD.

I read The Daily Signal every day, and appreciate the good coverage. It truly helps me to know our government and what is happening on the political scene. You are to be commended for asking questions that get to the heart of the issues, then giving Pruitt time and space to give meaningful answers.—Roger Pritchett

As President Trump would say, I greatly enjoyed Rob Bluey's Q&A with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. It's truly refreshing to have common sense prevailing over bureaucratic lunacy.

I hope the president has installed more people of Mr. Pruitt's caliber throughout all federal agencies. We need fewer bureaucrats and more efficiency. I send emails to my elected officials reminding them that bureaucrats should not be making laws.—Brannen Edwards

Thanks for your in-depth article. The regulatory "reform" rather than deregulation strikes the right cord with me. Three big ones for me:

- The cottage industry by environmental groups using "sue and settle" to enact nontransparent rules while sucking up taxpayer dollars to feed their livelihood is going bye-bye. Hip hip hooray!
- Getting back to basics with the true stewards of the environment is long overdue. The original conservationist, the farmers, ranchers, lumbermen, and individual states having new authority.
- Reducing permits times to six months instead of 10 to 15 years ... a miracle.

—Evelyn Zur, Parker, Colorado

You spotlighted a diamond in so many ways that Scott Pruitt looks like the diadem he is. Measure Trump by Gorsuch? Sure, he's promising. Measure Trump by Pruitt? Absolutely.

This guy is getting his job done, and the ripples of his results will change America for the better. Thanks for a stellar job.—John Leary

Rob Bluey's on-camera interview with Scott Pruitt contains positive and, frankly, hopeful information. Is it possible to get a transcript? I'd like to print a copy I can refer to and share. [We published it here, Pat.]

Thank you for the work The Daily Signal does. It is so difficult to hear rational and truthful voices amid the clamor and liberal hysteria of most news outlets.—Pat Parker

That was an incredible interview with an equally incredible public servant. I wish we could hear more things like that from the media. This is what the people need to know about making America great again. Thank you, and keep up the good work.—J.M. Clement Milam

Thank you for an interview that helped me to understand Scott Pruitt, and to clarify this administration's commitment to environmental quality with economy.—Dan Dean

I was impressed. Sounds like our president made a great decision when he chose Scott Pruitt to lead the EPA.—Hayward Beeson

Excellent, thoughtful, informative interview. With so much media noise and bias, I've become a scanner and headline reader. This article encouraged me start reading The Daily Signal for quality news.—Bill Weldon

It is so nice to have some optimism again. What a great interview. I am very impressed with Pruitt and his straightforward answers. What a good man. We need more articles like this on The Daily Signal.—Jared C. Murray

Never done this before, but thanks for a great interview. I'm going to try passing it around to those on the left as well as the right in an effort to win some minds. Great job, great journalism.—George Brunner

It is important to me to understand Pruitt's thinking and actions regarding the complex issues facing his department and our country. I got more and better information from your writing than I have heard or read from any other news sources.—Nancy Carter

Targeting Conflicts of Interest in EPA Science

Dear Daily Signal: Regarding Kevin Mooney's story on EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's intention to go after conflicts of interest: While progressives denounce scientists hired by oil companies, they have been doing the exact same thing to a much worse degree through the Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA Chief Set to Bar Government-Funded Experts From Agency's Science Panels").

No expert witness who has access to government funding, other than a fee being paid for their time as a witness, should ever be allowed to testify. That is just common understanding of a conflict of interest. Witnesses are going to steer their findings to reflect that which keeps their paycheck coming.

If we bother to look at what is being referred to as scientific proof of most claims about the environment and nature, even a well-informed layman can understand that most of it is not scientific at all.—Robin Boyd

Interestingly, the federal government requires all corporations, other business entities, and even nonprofits to have strict conflict-of-interest policies and procedures in place. Yet government is far and away the biggest abuser when it comes to conflict of interest.

Same thing with whistleblower policies. Righting this wrong is part of what is meant by the term “drain the swamp.”—Mark Simmons

If Pruitt can deliver we will all be grateful. Bless the man.—Don Rhudy

All Scott Pruitt is saying is that he will ignore research paid by government grants from researchers who do not conform to the conservative, closed-minded policy. In other words, if the findings were not consistent to debunking global warming their findings will be ignored. That’s really good science.—Joe A. Elizondo

Kevin Mooney’s reporting pointed out that the EPA has been financing studies that support the central EPA objective, which is to build the agency’s power and scope. The EPA also supports “experts” who agree with the agency. Pruitt has stated that his objective is to create transparency and make scientific decisions based on observable facts rather than on faulty models. It makes sense.—Bill Tanksley

The Charleston Gazette-Mail

https://www.wvgazettemail.com/opinion/daily_mail_opinion/daily_mail_editorials/guest-editorial-wheeling-epa-right-to-plan-for-hearing-in/article_971fdab2-e9a5-5a83-bb9b-9a0b404cad1f.html

Guest editorial (Wheeling): EPA right to plan for hearing in WV

By LTE, 11/6/17

You may remember that when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was holding hearings on its Clean Power Plan, the agency was at pains to avoid giving people in coal states opportunities to comment. The 2015 hearings were held in Atlanta, Denver, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C.

Now, the EPA is planning to rescind the Clean Power Plan, and hearings are scheduled on that.

One of them will be in Charleston on Nov. 28-29.

Good for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for insisting that people affected by his agency's plans will have opportunities to comment on them.

It's about time.

The Associated Press

<https://apnews.com/19aece3ccf5c4c9496a777497379e709/In-Seoul,-Trump-calls-for-North-Korea-to-%22make-a-deal%22>

In Seoul, Trump calls for North Korea to 'make a deal'

By Johnathan Lemire and Jill Colvin, 11/7/17

In a striking shift of tone, President Donald Trump abandoned his aggressive rhetoric toward North Korea on Tuesday, signaling a willingness to negotiate as he urged Pyongyang to “come to the table” and “make a deal.”

Trump, in his first day on the Korean peninsula, again pushed Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons program, but sounded an optimistic note, saying confidently, if vaguely, “ultimately, it'll all work out.” And while he said the United States would use military force if needed, he expressed his strongest inclination yet to deal with rising tensions with Pyongyang through diplomacy.

“It makes sense for North Korea to come to the table and make a deal that is good for the people of North Korea and for the world,” Trump said during a news conference alongside South Korean president Moon Jae-in. “I do see certain movement.”

Trump said he's seen "a lot of progress" in dealing with North Korea though he stopped short of saying whether he wanted direct diplomatic talks.

Trump also underscored the United States' military options, noting that three aircraft carrier groups and a nuclear submarine had been deployed to the region. But he said "we hope to God we never have to use" the arsenal.

And at an evening banquet, Trump teased an "exciting day tomorrow for many reasons that people will find out." He did not elaborate.

During his first day in South Korea, Trump at least temporarily lowered the temperature on his usually incendiary language about the North. There were no threats of unleashing "fire and fury" on North Korea, as Trump previously warned, nor did Trump revive his derisive nickname for North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un, "Little Rocket Man."

But he did decree that the dictator is "threatening millions and millions of lives, so needlessly" and highlighted a central mission of his first lengthy Asia trip: to enlist many nations in the region, including China and Russia, to cut off Pyongyang's economic lifeblood and pressure it into giving up its nuclear program.

Moon, who has been eager to solidify a friendship with Trump, said he hoped the president's visit would be a moment of inflection in the stand-off with North Korea and said the two leaders had "agreed to resolve the North Korea nuclear issue in peaceful manner" that would "bring permanent peace" to the peninsula.

"I know that you have put this issue at the top of your security agenda," said Moon. "So I hope that your visit to Korea and to the Asia Pacific region will serve as an opportunity to relieve some of the anxiety that the Korean people have due to North Korea's provocations and also serve as a turning point in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue."

Trump did bemoan that previous administrations had not handled Pyongyang, saying "Now is

not the right time to be dealing with this but it's what I got.”

He began his day in South Korea with a visit to Camp Humphreys, a joint US-Korean military base, but even as he walked among the weapons of war, he struck a hopeful note, saying: “it always works out.”

Much as he did in Japan, Trump indicated he would place the interlocking issues of security and trade at the heart of his visit. He praised South Korea for significant purchases of American military equipment and urged the two nations to have more equitable trade relationship. Moon said the two agreed on lifting the warhead payload limits on South Korean ballistic missiles and cooperating on strengthening South Korea's defense capabilities through the acquisition or development of advanced weapons systems.

Trump also pushed his economic agenda, saying that the current US-Korea trade agreement was “not successful and not very good for the United States.” But he said that he had a “terrific” meeting scheduled on trade, adding, “hopefully that'll start working out and working out so that we create lots of jobs in the United States, which is one of the very important reasons I'm here.”

At Camp Humphreys, Trump shook hands with American and Korean service members and sat with troops for lunch in a large mess hall, a visit intended to underscore the countries' ties and South Korea's commitment to contributing to its own defense.

But Trump was expected to skip the customary trip to the demilitarized zone separating north and south — a pilgrimage made by every U.S. president except one since Ronald Reagan as a demonstration of solidarity with the South. Trump has not ruled out a military strike and backed up his strong words about North Korea by sending a budget request to Capitol Hill on Monday for \$4 billion to support “additional efforts to detect, defeat, and defend against any North Korean use of ballistic missiles against the United States, its deployed forces, allies, or partners.”

North Korea has fired off more than a dozen missiles this year but none in nearly two months.

Trump and Moon agree on the need to pressure the North with sanctions and other deterrence

measures. But Trump has repeatedly insisted that all military options are on the table and suggested that Moon was being too lenient on the North. Moon, meanwhile, favors dialogue as the best strategy for defusing the nuclear tension and vehemently opposes a potential military clash that could cause enormous casualties in South Korea.

Moon rolled out an elaborate arrival ceremony for Trump at South Korea's stately presidential residence known as the Blue House. He made a point of saluting the recent gains of the U.S. stock market, a favorite Trump talking point, and congratulating the president a day ahead of the one-year anniversary of his election.

Fox News

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/11/07/saudi-arabia-calls-missile-launch-act-war-by-iran-vows-retaliation.html>

Saudi Arabia calls missile launch 'act of war' by Iran, vows retaliation

By Gregg Re, 11/7/17

Saudi Arabia on Monday called the attempted missile attack on Riyadh's main airport this weekend an "act of war" by Iran and vowed to retaliate.

Houthi rebels in Yemen, who have been fighting Saudi-backed forces there for several years, claimed responsibility for firing the ballistic missile on Saturday. The missile traveled more than 500 miles before Saudi Arabia intercepted it.

The official Saudi Press Agency charged that debris from the missile proved that it was made in Iran and smuggled into Yemen. American officials have previously charged that Iran has armed the Houthi rebels.

The attempted missile strike was "a blatant act of military aggression by the Iranian regime and could rise to be considered as an act of war," the Saudi Press Agency said in a statement.

Saudi Arabia "reserves its right to respond to Iran in the appropriate time and manner, in accordance with international law and based on the right of self-defense," the statement continued.

Speaking to CNN, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed al-Jubeir unambiguously charged that Iran had effectively declared war.

"We see this as an act of war," he said. "Iran can not lob missiles at Saudi cities and towns and expect us not to take steps."

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi called Saudi Arabia's claims "false, irresponsible, destructive and provocative," according to the Iranian news agency Tasnim.

The dramatic escalation in tension between the two rival nations came just a day after dozens of princes, senior military officers, businessmen and top officials were arrested in a sweeping anti-corruption probe in Saudi Arabia.

The unprecedented arrests were seen as a sign that 32-year-old Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who came to power in June, was seeking to aggressively consolidate power.

Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-trump-asia-china-popularity/chinese-fans-prepare-to-welcome-rich-powerful-free-spirit-trump-idUSKBN1D71BW>

Chinese fans prepare to welcome rich, powerful, 'free-spirit' Trump

By Pei Li, Christian Shepherd, 11/7/17

He may be a divisive figure back home, but U.S. President Donald Trump will be landing in friendly territory when he arrives in Beijing on Wednesday, judging by Chinese social media.

On platforms such as the Twitter-like Sina Weibo, Trump's Chinese supporters, who admire his business success and a free-wheeling style unconstrained by political correctness, are far more prominent than detractors.

While no comprehensive survey has been done to assess the size and intensity of Trump's popularity in China, several pundits suggest he has broad and vocal support.

"Chinese people are impressed that he is extremely rich, he loves things splendid and magnificent, and he loves to show off. Not every billionaire is like that," said Yin Hao, who translates American news and comedy clips for his nearly one million followers on Weibo.

Yin said his translated Trump-related video clips sometimes attract thousands of comments, where some supporters engage in name-calling and invective in defending the president.

"They will keep posting comments to defend Trump, mock his opponents under all news clips that involve Trump, and rebuke any comments that are not in favor of Trump," Yin said.

Chen Jibing, a Shanghai-based political commentator, said Trump's Chinese fan base is different than that for previous foreign leaders such as his predecessor, Barack Obama, and for British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who enjoyed widespread but tepid support.

"Chinese Trump fans are seriously and truly invested, and you had better not make light of offending them," Chen wrote in a social media post to his millions of followers.

POLITICALLY INCORRECT

While Trump encountered protests during his visits to Japan and South Korea on the first two legs of his 12-day Asian tour, such scenes are unlikely in China, which tightly controls public gatherings, with media and the internet subject to censorship.

China's ambassador to the United States, Cui Tiankai, said Trump will receive a "state visit-plus" experience in Beijing. He is expected to go to the Forbidden City and participate in an inspection of Chinese troops, though China has released few other details.

Trump's popularity in China largely comes from his disdain for political correctness and defiance of traditional liberal western views, which many Chinese consider elitist and unrealistic, Chen said.

His criticism of the U.S. trade deficit with China, for example, is seen by many in the country as standard U.S. political talk, some pundits say.

"In China, realists hold a deep-rooted belief that the rule of the jungle means the strong prey on the weak," Chen said. "For them, the world is not split into right and wrong, good or evil, it is only success or failure, the powerful and the weak."

Factual errors or gaffes by Trump tend to be ignored by his Chinese fans or explained away as harmless mistakes made by a leader who writes his own rules.

In Japan on Monday, Trump told Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that the Japanese economy was not performing as well as the United States' and appeared to mistakenly say that Japan's economy was the world's second-largest. It is actually third, after China's.

An editor at a major state publication told Reuters was inclined to be forgiving about Trump's

remark to Abe: “He’s a free spirit. No one can tell him what to do.”

Many on Chinese social media see Trump as a figure of fun.

“Rather than being a president, Trump is more like a comedian!” one Weibo user wrote.

EXCELLENT CHILDREN

In a country where parents are traditionally judged by the success of their children, Trump scores extra points for his daughter Ivanka, a businesswoman and currently advisor to President Trump, and her Mandarin-speaking children.

One Chinese state publication said that all five of Trump’s children are a testament to his character.

”You can tell what parents are like through their childrens’ success. Trump’s five children are all excellent, it means he is a very successful father,” the China Education Daily said on its social media account.

Ivanka Trump is sometimes referred to as “goddess” on Chinese social media, where some were upset that the first daughter would not be accompanying her father to Beijing.

“SAD! Ivanka is not coming to China,” said Jiang Xiaofeng, a journalist with Phoenix TV on Sina Weibo, appropriating one of Donald Trump’s favorite Twitter exclamations.

Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election/hard-fought-virginia-governors-race-to-test-trumps-clout-idUSKBN1D71D7>

Hard-fought Virginia governor's race to test Trump's clout

By John Whitesides, 11/7/17

A bitterly fought governor's race in Virginia leads a slate of state and local elections on Tuesday that offer an early test of President Donald Trump's political influence and possible strategies for both parties in next year's midterm elections.

New Jersey voters also will pick a new governor to replace outgoing Republican Chris Christie. Several big cities will select mayors and conservative Utah will hold a special election to replace U.S. Representative Jason Chaffetz, a Republican who stepped down before his term ended.

The marquee contest is in Virginia, where polls show Democrat Ralph Northam has a slight edge over Republican Ed Gillespie in a nasty governor's race that will offer clues about the country's political mood.

Gillespie, a Washington lobbyist and former Republican National Committee chairman, has kept his distance from Trump but embraced the president's combative campaign style with hard-edged ads hitting Northam on divisive issues such as immigration, gang crime and Confederate statues.

The ads put Northam, the state's lieutenant governor, on the defensive and helped Gillespie gain ground in opinion polls in recent weeks in Virginia, where Democrat Hillary Clinton beat Trump by 5 percentage points last year.

A Gillespie win would be the latest in a series of setbacks for Democrats, who suffered losses in four contested congressional special elections earlier this year despite grassroots liberal enthusiasm for resisting Trump.

ANOTHER SETBACK FOR DEMOCRATS?

Democrats fear it would also give Republicans a green light to exploit similar divisive cultural issues across the country next year, when all 435 House seats and 33 of the Senate's 100 seats will be up for election. Republicans currently control both chambers.

"Gillespie's ads played on every fear and dark impulse, and if we lose we are going to see a lot more of that," Democratic strategist Dane Strother said.

Gillespie rejected that characterization and said he was gaining ground against Northam because of his substantive policies and plans to bolster Virginia's economy. Trump, who endorsed Gillespie but never campaigned for him, backed that view on Monday.

"The state of Virginia economy, under Democrat rule, has been terrible. If you vote Ed Gillespie tomorrow, it will come roaring back!" he said on Twitter.

In response, Northam tweeted that voting was "the best way to refute Trump's lies." The Virginia economy had an unemployment rate of 3.7 percent in September, better than all but 13 states and below the national rate of just over 4 percent.

Gillespie's campaign has blasted an ad aired by an outside group supporting Northam, quickly taken down, that showed a white man in a pickup truck with a Confederate flag and a Gillespie sticker chasing down minority children.

"The momentum is clearly on our side," Gillespie told Fox News on Monday.

In the governor's race in Democratic-leaning New Jersey, Democrat Phil Murphy, a former investment banker and U.S. ambassador to Germany, has a comfortable lead in polls over

Republican Kim Guadagno, the state's lieutenant governor, who has been hampered by her association with the unpopular Christie.

In local races, Democratic Mayors Bill de Blasio in New York and Marty Walsh in Boston are expected to cruise to re-election, while Detroit, Atlanta, Charlotte, North Carolina, and Seattle also will pick mayors.

In Utah, Republican John Curtis, a strong Trump supporter, is a heavy favorite to fill the congressional seat left vacant by Chaffetz.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 3h

Stock market hit yet another all-time record high yesterday. There is great confidence in the moves that my Administration....

3.3K 4.8K 23K



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 3h

Replying to @realDonaldTrump

....is making. Working very hard on TAX CUTS for the middle class, companies and jobs!

3.2K 3.5K 19K



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 3h

Ralph Northam will allow crime to be rampant in Virginia. He's weak on crime, weak on our GREAT VETS, Anti-Second Amendment....

5.0K 4.7K 17K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

@EdWGillespie will totally turn around the high crime and poor economic performance of VA. MS-13 and crime will be gone. Vote today, ASAP!



4.6K



5.3K



20K



https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1101111111111111111

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Wed 5/31/2017 10:44:55 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Morgan Stanley: 'COVFEFE': Trump's late-night tweet goes viral -- TRUMP's 'cellphone diplomacy' -- BUZZ: White House war room to EEOB -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: Romney's retreat schedule -- COMING IN SEPT.: London Playbook

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's PLAYBOOK presented by Morgan Stanley
05/31/2017 06:42 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Good Wednesday morning. THE TWEET READ ROUND THE WORLD --

@realDonaldTrump at 12:06 a.m.: "Despite the constant negative press covfefe". The tweet stood alone -- nothing before it, or after it. If you had any doubt that the president of the United States was sitting late at night with his own device in the White House residence, this should probably dispel that. Trump deleted the tweet at some point in the 5 a.m. hour. #covfefe is now a trending hashtag on Twitter and launched an Urban Dictionary entry overnight (<http://bit.ly/2qzNP3i>). **See the deleted tweet, which got over 126,000 retweets and 160,000 likes** <http://bit.ly/2sdnZPy>

--**@realDonaldTrump** at 6:09 a.m.: "Who can figure out the true meaning of "covfefe" ??? Enjoy!"

--**@jimmykimmel** at 2:15 a.m.: "More what makes me saddest is that I know I'll never write anything funnier than #covfefe".

NOW BACK TO REALITY -- AP's VIVIAN SALAMA: "Trump's cellphone diplomacy raises security concerns": "President Donald Trump has been handing out his cellphone number to world leaders and urging them to call him directly, an unusual invitation that breaks diplomatic protocol and is raising concerns about the security and secrecy of the U.S. commander in chief's communications. Trump has urged leaders of Canada and Mexico to reach him on his cellphone, according to former and current U.S. officials with direct knowledge of the practice. Of the two, only Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has taken advantage of the offer so far, the officials said. ...

"Presidents generally place calls on one of several secure phone lines, including those in the White House Situation Room, the Oval Office or the presidential limousine. Even if Trump uses his government-issued cellphone, his calls are vulnerable to eavesdropping, particularly from foreign governments, national security experts say. 'If you are speaking on an open line, then it's an open line, meaning those who have the ability to monitor those conversations are doing so,' said Derek Chollet, a former Pentagon adviser and National Security Council official now at the German Marshall Fund of the United States." <http://apne.ws/2qAheGe>

BUZZ -- The White House is scouting office space for the much-speculated about new White House "war room" in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building next to the White House. (There isn't much open office space in the West Wing these days.) The war room would manage fallout from the scandals engulfing the Trump administration. Corey Lewandowski -- one of the potential hires for the war room -- has been spotted in and around the White House in recent days.

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: MITT ROMNEY'S annual retreat -- the E2 Summit -- will be June 8-10 at the Stein Eriksen Lodge in Park City. On the docket this year: Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, former CIA Director Mike Morell and Microsoft Chairman John Thompson. **GET YOUR MONEY'S WORTH!** There will be "enthusiast sessions" like trap shooting with Paul Ryan, pilates with Ann Romney and early-morning hikes with Mitt Romney.

HOT VIDEO -- @AlexanderEmmons: "Watch as Stuart Jones, a high-level acting official in the State Dept, is asked why they criticize Iranian elections but never Saudi Arabia:" <http://bit.ly/2qz8VP0> ... ***Jones is retiring soon after a career as a foreign service officer.***

INSIDE THE WEST WING -- "As Trump Weighs Shake-Up, He Faces Recruiting Challenge," by NYT's Peter Baker and Maggie Haberman: "[T]alks with two former advisers, Corey Lewandowski and David N. Bossie, about joining the White House staff [have grown] more complicated. Mr. Bossie ... signaled that he does not plan to join the staff, citing family concerns, one person close to the discussions said Tuesday. ... Whether Mr. Trump will actually reorganize his White House team remained uncertain.

"He has often talked about expelling people from his orbit, only to decide not to, as he did with Stephen K. Bannon, his chief strategist, a few weeks ago. Seemingly reinvigorated, Mr. Bannon is now among those leading the effort to convince the president that he needs to overhaul his operation to focus more intensely on the nationalist policy goals that animated his candidacy. ... The president has joked repeatedly with [Reince] Priebus, whose mother is of Greek descent, that he would send him to Athens as ambassador to Greece. Speculation grew last week when a list of ambassadors was compiled at Mr. Priebus's request, and the Athens position was left blank, officials said." <http://nyti.ms/2sl95Gi>

POLITICO STARS ANDREW RESTUCCIA and JOSH DAWSEY: "Russia probe scares off potential appointees": "Four people who work closely with prospective nominees told POLITICO that some potential hires are having second thoughts about trying to land executive branch appointments as federal and congressional investigations threaten to pose a serious distraction to Trump's agenda. ... According to the nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service, the White House has announced nominees for just 117 of the 559 most important Senate-confirmed positions."
<http://politi.co/2rDE8Rd>

-- WHO REPLACES MIKE DUBKE?: Communications director to President Donald Trump is a nearly impossible job. Setting a message for a man who could undermine it with a tweet is not a terribly appealing job to the top communicators in D.C., many of them tell us. Who should get the job? Drop us a line, we'll be publishing a round of ideas in the coming Playbooks.

DEADLINE WATCH -- PRESIDENT TRUMP must decide by tomorrow whether he will move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. He can sign a six-month waiver to keep the embassy in Tel Aviv while he continues to seek Middle East peace. He can also extend the waiver while signaling his intent to move it eventually. That's what we hear he'll do.

DEPT. OF TIME TICKING -- "Trump's window for scoring early legislative victories is shrinking," by WaPo's Damian Paletta and Mike Debonis: "President Trump faces an increasingly narrow path to win major legislative victories before the looming August recess, with only two months left to revive his health-care or tax initiatives before Congress departs for a long break. White House officials said Tuesday that Trump has become increasingly incensed that legislation is bogging down in the Senate, something they blame on Democrats. ...

"White House officials plan to push Senate Republicans in June to vote on a repeal of the Affordable Care Act, and they want to spend the rest of the summer whipping up support for major tax cuts. They are also planning to push lawmakers soon to consider an infrastructure package, although that effort has also moved more slowly because his staff hasn't put together a final plan." <http://wapo.st/2slrpip>

-- BACK IN REALITY ... -- Can the Senate cobble together a health-care plan in June? Sure anything can happen. Is it likely? No. They have hardly started putting together their own version of a health-care overhaul, and last week, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said, "I don't know how we get to 50 (votes) at the moment. But that's the goal." That means they are nowhere close, at the moment. Keep in mind the next time you hear the White House predict something: they've been saying for months that they are on the brink of releasing an infrastructure package. After the August recess it only gets tougher. Congress will have to fund government, lift the debt ceiling and then it's campaign season.

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Morgan Stanley's innovative financing is helping Unilever advance a commitment to sustainable growth. Capital creates change. Read the full story at morganstanley.com/unilever. CRC 1313323 10/15 *****

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Bombing in diplomatic area of Kabul kills 80, wounds scores," by AP's Rahim Faiez and Amir Shah in Kabul: "A massive explosion rocked a highly secure diplomatic area of Kabul on Wednesday morning, killing 80 people and wounding as many as 350, an attack that left a scene of mayhem and destruction and sent a huge plume of smoke over the Afghan capital. The target of the attack -- which officials said was a suicide car bombing -- was not immediately known, but Ismail Kawasi, spokesman of the public health ministry, said most of the casualties were civilians, including women and children. It was one of the worst attacks Kabul has seen since the drawdown of foreign forces at the end of 2014.

"Associated Press images from the scene showed the German Embassy and several other embassies located in the area heavily damaged in the explosion. It wasn't known if any foreign diplomats were among the casualties but Germany and Pakistan said some of their embassy employees and staff were hurt in the explosion."
<http://apne.ws/2qzy9Nf>

JARED'S MOOD from **ANNIE KARNI**, the master of Jared intrigue -- **"Kushner tries to pretend everything's normal":** "There has been no rallying the troops in the White House, and no open acknowledgement from President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, that he has transformed from behind-the-scenes West Wing powerbroker to its lead distracting story. Kushner led three meetings in the West Wing on Tuesday -- and never once acknowledged the stories about him that dominated cable news since last week, when it was reported that during the campaign he discussed setting up a secret communications backchannel to Moscow."
<http://politi.co/2qyFBbB>

MATT NUSSBAUM, TARA PALMERI and JOSH DAWSEY -- "Spicer's 'middle finger' to the press": "On the recent trip abroad, he repeatedly showed the strain of the job. At one point, he got drinks with a group of other staffers and reporters in Jerusalem, where he was adamant that the conversation steer clear of work. 'The most we've seen of Sean [Spicer] was at a rooftop bar in Jerusalem,' said one U.S. journalist on the trip. 'But he refused to take work-related questions and said if you asked him a work-related question, then you had to take a shot.' The comment was made in jest, according to people present, and no shots were taken." <http://politi.co/2rTM14V>

INSIDE STATE -- "Tillerson's Enigmatic Chief of Staff Wields Power, Not Spotlight," by Bloomberg's Nick Wadhams: "One unfamiliar name stood out among the coterie of family and aides President Donald Trump brought into his meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican last week: Margaret Peterlin. The presence of Peterlin -- Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's chief of staff -- underscored the former congressional staffer and Mars Inc. lawyer's growing clout in the administration. Not even Press Secretary Sean Spicer, a practicing Catholic who interacts with Trump almost daily,

made it to the Papal audience, which included Tillerson as well as Melania and Ivanka Trump.

"Peterlin, a Navy veteran who as a congressional aide helped draft the Patriot Act after the Sept. 11 attacks, gained Tillerson's trust by navigating him through his Senate confirmation hearings in January. With most top State Department jobs unfilled, Peterlin has more power than any chief of staff in recent memory, bringing in key associates to fill critical openings." <https://bloom.bg/2qzcVzh>

-- FASCINATING DETAIL: "She's become famous within the State Department for the Post-it notes she leaves on staff members' computer monitors asking them to chase tasks. Other times she prints out emails and attaches Post-its to them, with instructions on how to proceed."

THE FAMILY -- "Arrested, missing China activists spark criticism of Trump," by AP's Erika Kinetz in Shanghai: "The arrest and disappearance of three labor activists investigating a Chinese company that produces Ivanka Trump-branded shoes in China prompted a call for her brand to cease working with the supplier and raised questions about whether the first family's commercial interests would muddy U.S. leadership on human rights. The men were working with a U.S. nonprofit to publish a report next month alleging low pay, excessive overtime and possible misuse of student labor, according to China Labor Watch executive director Li Qiang, who lost contact with the investigators over the weekend. China Labor Watch has been exposing poor working conditions at suppliers to some of the world's best-known companies for nearly two decades, but Li said his work has never before attracted this level of scrutiny from China's state security apparatus." <http://apne.ws/2rj1GI2>

NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- "Poll: Support for Trump impeachment rises," by Steven Shepard: "An increasing percentage of voters want Congress to impeach President Donald Trump - even if they don't think Trump has committed the 'high crimes and misdemeanors' the Constitution requires. Forty-three percent of voters want Congress to begin impeachment proceedings, according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll, up from 38 percent last week. ...

"But that's still less than the 45 percent who don't want Congress to impeach Trump, down a tick from 46 percent the week before. Only three American presidents in history have faced legitimate impeachment threats. Much of the support for impeaching Trump comes from political considerations, the poll shows - not a belief that Trump is actually guilty of impeachable offenses, like treason, bribery or obstructing justice." <http://politi.co/2rEa34b>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Scott Pelley out as CBS Evening News anchor," by Hadas Gold: "Scott Pelley is out as 'CBS Evening News' anchor, POLITICO has confirmed. Pelley will stay with the network as a full-time correspondent for '60 Minutes,' according to people familiar with the decision. The New York Post first reported the news on Tuesday evening. A formal announcement is expected on Wednesday. Those familiar with the

situation said the removal has been in the works for a while. Guest anchors will fill the evening news chair until a replacement is chosen. Pelley has been out on '60 Minutes' assignment for the past few days, but he's expected to return to the anchor seat to say farewell to viewers." <http://politi.co/2rDwZR2>

-- **SEND US YOUR IDEAS** for who should take over the anchor chair at CBS. We'll publish some names in Playbook.

TRUMP'S WEDNESDAY -- THE PRESIDENT is meeting with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and later will host Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc to the White House.

THE JUICE ...

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK** -- OZY Fest, happening July 22 at Central Park's Rumsey Playfield in NYC, is adding a number of political speakers to its lineup: Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Jill Biden, Mark Cuban and Marcus Samuelsson.

-- **HAPPENING TODAY** -- Recode co-founders Kara Swisher and Walt Mossberg will interview Hillary Clinton at Recode's annual Code Conference in Rancho Palos Verdes, California. Clinton is expected discuss Russia's efforts to influence 2016, the state of play in politics and tech's gender gap. The interview will be broadcast live on CNBC and livestream on Facebook and Periscope at 3:15 p.m. eastern.

INTRODUCING LONDON PLAYBOOK: Jack Blanchard -- currently the Daily Mirror's political editor -- is joining POLITICO Europe to launch a London Playbook starting Sept. 4. Blanchard will bring our flagship product to London and all those interested in what makes Europe's global city tick, as the U.K. seeks out a new role in Europe and the world. Blanchard has worked at the Boston Standard and Yorkshire Post, and he is also a Sky News contributor. **Read POLITICO Europe Executive editor Matt Kaminski memo** <http://politi.co/2qF16lZ> ... **To sign up early** <http://politi.co/2qyWQJA>

-- **POLITICO EUROPE** has also launched a U.K. Election Tracker. **Available for iPhones** <http://politi.co/2sl4gN1>

Playbook Reads

TRUMP'S PARIS OPTIONS -- "Trump's climate conundrum nears a verdict," by Andrew Restuccia: "Donald Trump's advisers have sent wildly different messages to U.S. allies about the president's willingness to remain in the Paris climate agreement - adding to the confusion as he appears set to render a verdict this week. ... For all the mystery, though, Trump has only a few main options for dealing with the non-binding climate deal, one of former President Barack Obama's proudest diplomatic

achievements. He can stick with the deal, while unwinding most of Obama's climate policies and pledges for reducing greenhouse gas pollution. He can use the threat of leaving to push other countries for concessions that benefit U.S. fossil fuels. He can even try to renegotiate the agreement - highly implausible, given that nearly 200 governments took part in crafting it. Or he can do nothing." <http://politi.co/2qyQOZt>

FLYNN WATCH -- "Flynn to provide some documents in response to Senate subpoenas," by Darren Samuelsohn and Austin Wright: "Michael Flynn has now agreed to provide some documents to the Senate Intelligence Committee as part of its investigation into Russia's meddling in the presidential election. The decision by President Donald Trump's former national security adviser comes after initially refusing last week to comply with an initial subpoena.

"Flynn informed the committee in a letter Tuesday he will provide some documents related to his two businesses, along with some personal materials, according to a source close to Flynn who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Flynn is expected to begin providing documents on a rolling basis by June 6, the source said." <http://politi.co/2rDQpoX>

-- "Mike Flynn's Pro-Turkey Work: An Unfinished Documentary to Boost Country's Image," by WSJ's Dion Nissenbaum: "Last fall, as retired Lt. Gen. Mike Flynn traveled the country stumping for Donald Trump, his business partner holed up in a small Washington hotel room with the former head of Turkish military intelligence to work on a special project. 'General, hi. I'm Bijan Kian, welcome to Washington, D.C.,' Mr. Kian, the head of Mr. Flynn's consulting firm, greeted the Turkish dignitary. 'Gen. Flynn, my partner, sends his regards to you.' The hotel room meeting was filmed as part of a documentary the Flynn Intel Group was producing for a Turkish businessman, who paid \$530,000 to the lobbying shop to polish the country's image after a botched military coup. That contract has landed Mr. Flynn in legal jeopardy. The unfinished, never-distributed film, details of which haven't been previously reported, appears to represent the core of the Flynn Intel Group's work for Turkish interests." <http://on.wsj.com/2qylRno>

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Capital creates a fresh perspective. Can business contribute to a sustainable future? Absolutely. Morgan Stanley helped Unilever point the way forward raising £250 million (\$415 million) with a first-of-its-kind green bond offering. The capital went toward projects that promote Unilever's vision of reducing waste, water use and greenhouse gases by 30% in existing factories compared with 2008 levels. In new factories funded by this green bond, Unilever is committed to cutting in half CO2 emissions, water use and waste. Now Unilever can have less impact on the planet.¹ Capital creates change. morganstanley.com/unilever

DISCLAIMER:

¹Above statements based on Unilever's project selection criteria, communicated in the company's press release dated March 19, 2014. Exchange rate used to calculate "\$415 million" was as published by Bloomberg on March 19, 2014, of 1.6644. For further details and information about Unilever's green bond issuance, please see Unilever's

press release dated March 19, 2014. CRC 1297328 10/15 *****

DEEP DIVE - BETHANY MCLEAN in Vanity Fair's Summer issue, "How Wells Fargo's Cutthroat Corporate Culture Allegedly Drove Bankers to Fraud": "Most Americans have assumed their bank accounts are sacrosanct. But with the major scandal unfolding at Wells Fargo, angry former employees illuminate the alarming pressure that allegedly led local bankers to defraud perhaps more than a million customers." <http://bit.ly/2sdaaAJ>

WHAT WALL STREET IS READING - "Steven Cohen's Hedge-Fund Comeback Shoots for a Record Target: \$20 Billion," by WSJ's Rob Copeland: "Mr. Cohen's goal is to amass \$20 billion once he gets back in the business as early as next year, he and his representatives have said in conversations with bankers, colleagues and potential investors. That would likely include his family fortune of \$11 billion. The new target would blow past the \$16 billion managed at peak by Mr. Cohen's SAC Capital Advisors LP, one of the most profitable hedge-fund firms in the U.S. before it pleaded guilty to criminal insider trading charges in 2013." <http://on.wsj.com/2ragguC>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Megyn Kelly: I don't love politics," by Hadas Gold: "Megyn Kelly has a confession: She doesn't love politics. 'I was not born to be a political news anchor,' she said, in a POLITICO interview. The newly minted NBC anchor was known for her fast-paced, hard-hitting nightly show on Fox News and moderating prowess on the debate stage, tangling with then-candidate Donald Trump. But now that she's set to launch a Sunday news magazine show and a daily morning show on NBC, Kelly said she's happy to be leaving the political frying pan. 'No, I'm not going to miss the crazy news cycle. The audience enjoyed the show and I'm grateful for it,' Kelly said. 'But it wasn't who I was and it isn't who I am. ... While I will cover politics ... I don't want to do only that. It's not enough for me personally.'" <http://politi.co/2rTrYn4>

PHIL RUCKER: STAR OF THE ONION -- "'Washington Post' Reporter Frustrated Every Space In Parking Garage Taken Up By Anonymous Source" - The Onion: <http://bit.ly/2rnaOhb>

Playbookers

SPOTTED -- Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) in coach on a Seattle-appropriate purple rain jacket, on a delayed Alaska 2 from Seattle to DCA Tuesday ... House Transportation Chairman Bill Shuster in jeans and short sleeves at Joe's Stone Crab's bar Tuesday ... Arkansas Lt. Gov Tim Griffin and Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-Va.) at Landini Brothers Restaurant last night in Old Town Alexandria. Griffin and Comstock go way back to when they were counsels on the House Government Reform Committee with investigator Dave Bossie. Comstock and Griffin later led the research effort in 2000 on Al Gore with senior researcher Matt Rhoades. Griffin was a member of Congress from 2010 until 2014.

WEEKEND WEDDING -- Emily Howell, former POLITICO assistant editor, on Saturday married **Lyndon DeSalvo**, a recent graduate from University of Pennsylvania's city planning masters program. The ceremony was at Mad River Barn in the beautiful Green Mountains in Waitsfield, Vermont. The couple met more than a decade ago while attending Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. They have since traveled the globe together. After a honeymoon in Mexico, the newlyweds are moving to Cambridge this summer where the bride will be pursuing a MPH at Harvard. Among the attendees were bridesmaid Vivyan Tran (former Politico and current WSJ, who sat behind Bernie Sanders on her flight back to Newark from Burlington) and Tim Lueders-Dumont (policy director for Vermont State Treasurer). **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2rDt3j2> ... <http://bit.ly/2rDYjyt>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Ashley Verville, communications director for Rep. Ed Perlmutter (D-Colo.) and **Shane Verville**, performance coach at U.S. Bank, welcomed Olivia Lynn Verville last Wednesday. **Pic** <http://politi.co/2rjeiz7>

-- **Molly Murphy**, partner at ALG Polling, and **Sean Dryden**, senior analyst at PerryUndem Research and Communication, welcomed a baby boy, Charlie Cooper Dryden, over the Memorial Day weekend. Charlie came in at 7 lbs 8 oz. Since his parents are pollsters, "the kid is going to have a knack for math and was statistically within the margin of error in all categories."

ENGAGED - ROMNEY ALUMNI -- Micah Spangler, deputy director of legislative affairs at the United Nations Foundation, proposed to **Jill Nguyen**, senior client strategy manager at Phone2Action, over the Memorial Day weekend. "Micah popped the question on the steps of Mexico City's historic Metropolitan Cathedral. The two first met in early 2016 but didn't start dating until this year, when, after preparing to collaborate on an advocacy event at UN Headquarters, Jill (a vocal Hillary supporter) texted Micah (a former Romney 2012 staffer), 'I can't believe you're a Republican.'" **Pic** <http://politi.co/2qyMYjf>

TRANSITIONS -- Julie McClain Downey started last week as national director of campaign communications at EMILY's List. She most recently served as the New Hampshire communications director for the Hillary Clinton campaign. ... **John Martin** started on Tuesday as principal associate commissioner for legislation at the FDA. Martin, the pride of Grapevine, Texas, most recently served as legislative director for Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.). ... **Tom Rogan** has been named a commentary writer at the Washington Examiner. He was previously a contributor. <http://bit.ly/2rakB9S> ... **Alberto Martinez**, EVP at Targeted Victory and former chief of staff to Sen. Marco Rubio, has joined Maverick PAC's board of directors.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Jake Hargraves ... Scott Mason, former Lowe's lobbyist, former director of congressional affairs for the Trump campaign and the transition, now at Holland & Knight (hat tip: Theo Meyer) ... Jeff Freeland, OMB legislative staffer, former deputy COS for Rep. Chris Collins and former Trump congressional volunteer ... Stratton Kirton ... Rob Noel ... Loren Duggan ... **(was**

Saturday): Andrew Tabler of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (h/t Mallory Shelbourne)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Lauren Passalacqua, comms director at the DSCC, a Gillibrand alum and noted country music fan. How she's celebrating: "It's a surprise! I've shown uncharacteristic restraint by not prying for information." Read her Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2qA0y1P>

BIRTHDAYS: Michael O'Connor, partner at Williams & Connolly and co-chair of its Transactions and Business Counseling practice group (h/t Robert Barnett) ... Al From, the pride of South Bend, Ind. ... Clint Eastwood is 87 ... Bernard Goldberg is 72 ... Katie Troller Bond ... Aditi Srinivas ... Rep. Larry Bucshon is 55 (R-Ind.) ... Rep. Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-Guam) is 84 ... Politico's Janet Michaud, Brad Bosserman, Matt Berman, Jamie Oh and Hugh Stapleton ... RNC finance alum Angela Meyers ... Debra DeShong, EVP and managing director at Subject Matter (h/t Amy Weiss) ... McClatchy's Julie Moos ... Dan Iten ... Clark Judge, founder and managing director of White House Writers Group ... Phil Elwood, principal at Chester Creek Consulting ... "Last Week Tonight" writer Juli Weiner ... former Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) is 69 ...

... **Bert Kaufman** ... Ray Quintero, principal at Healthsperien (h/t Kristofer Eisenla) ... Vidhya Murugesan ... Saul Levine is 79 ... Jay Dana is 3-0 ... Dan Pino is 28 ... Howard Homonoff, SVP at MediaLink (h/t Michael Knopf) ... billionaire Ira Rennert is 83 ... Rabbi Aaron Potek is 31 (h/ts Jewish Insider) ... Fariba Yassaee (h/t Ben Chang) ... Marilyn Tavenner, president and CEO of AHIP ... Erik Telford, VP of digital at In Pursuit Of ... Ray Quintero ... Sara Carter, national security/war correspondent at Sinclair's Circa ... Paul Heinan ... Stephanie Weix ... Rhonda Roberts (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Karen Quarles ... Pamela Hughes ... Steve Duprey ... Bill Oglesby ... Alix Heard ... Joe Namath is 74 ... DMC is 53 ... Brooke Shields is 52 ... Colin Farrell is 41 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Capital creates a fresh perspective. Can business contribute to a sustainable future? Absolutely. Morgan Stanley helped Unilever point the way forward raising £250 million (\$415 million) with a first-of-its-kind green bond offering. The capital went toward projects that promote Unilever's vision of reducing waste, water use and greenhouse gases by 30% in existing factories compared with 2008 levels. In new factories funded by this green bond, Unilever is committed to cutting in half CO2 emissions, water use and waste. Now Unilever can have less impact on the planet.¹ Capital creates change. morganstanley.com/unilever

DISCLAIMER:

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This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Agriculture
Sent: Mon 9/18/2017 2:03:40 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Agriculture: Montana barley growers look to Mexico — NYT highlights Big Food's role in obesity crisis abroad — Pork warns of 'financial apocalypse' if NAFTA 2.0 bombs

By John Lauinger | 09/18/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Sabrina Rodriguez, Christine Haughney, Megan Cassella, Catherine Boudreau and Helena Bottemiller Evich

MONTANA BARLEY GROWERS LOOK TO MEXICO: The craft beer sector in Mexico is expanding rapidly, and Montana barley growers want in on the action. Pro Ag's Catherine Boudreau traveled to Montana in June and witnessed how the U.S. Grains Council used funding from two controversial export-promotion initiatives - the Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development - in a bid to entice Mexican craft brewers into making deals.

Montana farmer Mark Lacher noted how earlier this year industry heavyweights AB-InBev and MillerCoors - which purchase nearly two-thirds of the barley grown in north-central Montana - announced they were reducing the number and size of production contracts with area farmers by anywhere from 20 percent to 60 percent due to oversupply. "The doors are open," Lacher said, referring to potential for new export arrangements.

The budget battle: Spending hawks routinely criticize MAP and FMD as being wasteful, and the Trump administration's fiscal 2018 budget proposal called for the programs to be eliminated. The Senate's agricultural appropriations bill for fiscal 2018, which has not been passed, directs USDA to fully fund both MAP and FMD at \$200 million and \$34.5 million, respectively. But it remains to be seen how the programs will fare as Congress settles fiscal 2018 funding: The House version doesn't include similar language.

Getting by in the post-TPP world: Proponents say MAP and FMD are essential tools to promote U.S. agricultural products. "Our biggest competitors, like Brazil and Argentina, aren't sitting around waiting for the U.S. to start its own bilateral agreements," said Kimberly Atkins, vice president and COO of the U.S. Grains Council. "And the 11 other countries in the TPP are discussing moving forward without the U.S., so these programs have become even more important to remain competitive against other exporters." Pros, full story [here](#).

HAPPY MONDAY, SEPT. 18! Welcome to Morning Ag, where your host didn't watch the Emmys, never liked covering the Emmys, but was glad to see that Julia Louis-Dreyfus [broke the record](#) for most Emmys won by a performer for the same show. "Seinfeld" associations never end. You know the deal: Thoughts, news, tips? Send them to jlauinger@politico.com or [@jmlauinger](#). Follow the whole team at [@Morning_Ag](#).

NYT HIGHLIGHTS BIG FOOD'S ROLE IN OBESITY CRISIS ABROAD: Nestlé landed in the hot seat this weekend when The New York Times gave front-page treatment on Sunday to a global food and health [story](#). Nestlé presents itself as committed to addressing global hunger, but the NYT suggested the company is contributing to rising childhood and adult obesity in

Brazil through a door-to-door sales model in which vendors peddle Kit-Kats and sugary yogurts to the poor.

Go big abroad: Nestlé is not the only multinational food company struggling for new business in emerging markets. As Americans shift away from eating processed foods, Nestlé and other multinationals have sought new markets for their products, "unleashing a marketing juggernaut that is upending traditional diets from Brazil to Ghana to India," as the paper phrased it. Here are some of the highlights:

- Sales of carbonated drinks in Latin America have doubled since 2000.
- Fast food grew 30 percent worldwide from 2011 to 2016.
- In 2016, Domino's Pizza opened a new store every seven hours, the vast majority of which were outside the U.S.

Reality check: One of the article's most alarming statistics: Globally, more people are now obese than underweight.

A Nestlé spokesperson defended the company while acknowledging the deeper childhood obesity problems currently plaguing Brazil. "We are disappointed by the New York Times' biased approach in this article, which we believe does not accurately reflect the breadth and reality of our product portfolio in the context of the public health issues impacting the people of Brazil," the spokesperson said. "However, we do agree that the real and serious issues raised in the article should be discussed in a balanced and constructive way that focuses on practical solutions."

GATES, OTHERS DROP \$45M INTO PHOTOSYNTHESIS RESEARCH: Researchers at the University of Illinois have figured out how to use photosynthesis to improve crop yields in tobacco by 20 percent. Now they're planning to apply what they've learned to cowpeas and cassava from Sub-Saharan Africa as well as rice from Southeast Asia. Those were among the topics discussed Friday at a summit of researchers and elected officials, including Rep. [Rodney Davis](#) (R-Ill.), chair of House Ag's Biotechnology, Horticulture and Research Subcommittee. Researchers are working with \$45 million received from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research and the U.K. Department for International Development.

'RIPE' for expansion: For the past five years, the university's group Realizing Increased Photosynthetic Efficiency (RIPE) has made use of a \$25 million grant from the Gates Foundation to study how to make photosynthesis work more effectively. With the extra funds, "the focus is still improving photosynthetic efficiencies," said Don Ort, RIPE's deputy director, but to apply it to other crops.

The nutrition angle: While the funding does not directly aim to focus on declining nutrient concentrations in plants, a phenomenon Pro Ag's Helena Bottemiller Evich [chronicled](#) last week, Ort said the group plans to informally partner with other researchers on the topic. "It certainly is

a clear recognition from all of us that that kind of research needs to be done," he said.

SURVEYING IRMA'S TOLL IN FLORIDA, GEORGIA: One week after Hurricane Irma battered Florida and Georgia, growers in affected areas are scrambling to stave off the spread of disease and avoid total destruction of their crops, including citrus, cotton, sugarcane, sweet corn, pecans and tomatoes. The key, multiple farmers and industry members told MA, is restoring electricity to farms and pumping out floodwater as soon as possible.

"An immediate need is getting the power on, particularly in rural areas. It's critical for running and operating farms," said John Walt Boatright, national affairs coordinator at the Florida Farm Bureau. Dairy farmers, in particular, Boatright said, are struggling to get water to cows and run pumps as thousands of farms across the state remain without electricity.

Sonny on the scene: Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue will be in Florida today to survey Irma-hit farms before heading to Texas on Thursday to assess damage from Hurricane Harvey. On Friday, he toured affected areas in Georgia, his home state. About 30 percent of the Georgia pecan crop was destroyed, Perdue tweeted on Friday. But that percentage could be much higher, said Andy Lucas, director of the Georgia Farm Bureau's information department. "A lot of pecan trees are generational. So, the loss of a pecan tree is significant," he said. "We've gone into some of the orchards and it was the most disheartening thing we've seen so far. Recovery is going to take awhile."

Georgia's tobacco and cotton growers were also left with extensive damages. It will take weeks before growers have a full picture of their losses, but the Florida Farm Bureau estimates the price tag for Florida agriculture will be in the billions. "Right now, it's a matter of getting the water out, but, really, we consider ourselves lucky," Eric Hopkins, senior vice president of Hundley Farms, which grows sugarcane, sweet corn, green beans and tomatoes in both states, told MA. "It could've been much worse, but we won't be certain until we start harvesting our crops."

Florida flooding, mapped: In large sections of the state, 80 percent of land was flooded after Irma, and in parts of South Florida, 100 percent of the land was underwater, according to flood maps compiled and merged by two NOAA satellites, which FEMA used to evaluate flood zones as of Sept. 11.

THIS WEEK: CENSKY, MCKINNEY GO BEFORE SENATE AG: Secretary Perdue's confirmation hearing before the Senate Agriculture Committee came 63 days after the White House formally announced his selection. Stephen Censky (67 days) and Ted McKinney (61 days) have had about the same amount of time to prepare for theirs. The joint affair is set to start at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

If Perdue had his druthers, Censky and McKinney, nominees for subcabinet posts that are key to his planned reorganization of USDA, wouldn't have had to wait around quite as long. The slow process aside, Censky, the nominee for deputy secretary, and McKinney, who is up for the newly created post of undersecretary for trade and foreign agricultural affairs, are not expected to meet much opposition in the Senate.

Here's a quick rundown of other events this week:

Lighthizer talks priorities: U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer will discuss policy priorities in U.S. trade this morning at an [event](#) hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

NAFTA and U.S. produce: MA can't imagine a scenario where Lighthizer wouldn't mention the NAFTA 2.0 talks, which are slated to resume in Ottawa from Sept. 23-27. But in case you want more of a warm-up for Round 3, the Wilson Center's Canada Institute will hold a discussion in Washington, D.C., this afternoon on "Agriculture Under NAFTA 2.0: What's in Store for North America's Fresh Produce Industry." Register [here](#).

#CONCORDIA17: The 2017 Concordia Annual Summit [takes place](#) alongside the U.N. General Assembly in New York City today and tomorrow. If you're going, say hello to Helena Bottemiller Evich, who's serving as assembly chair for a strategic dialogue on the farm bill on Tuesday, from 11:20 a.m. to 1:20 p.m.

Boosting sustainable productivity: The Farm Foundation is teaming with USDA's Economic Research Service and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development for a two-day symposium on Tuesday and Wednesday geared toward research and innovation policies for sustainable productivity growth in agriculture. National Press Club is the venue. Agenda [here](#).

More produce talk in Washington: The United Fresh Produce Association holds its Washington Conference today through Wednesday, with keynotes coming from Sen. [Jeff Flake](#) (R-Ariz), Rep. [Bob Goodlatte](#) (R-Va.) and Bob Woodward. More [here](#).

CropLife America does the Ritz: The group's government policy weekend and 2017 annual meeting will get underway on Friday evening. The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel, in Dana Point, Calif., is the place. More [here](#).

PORK WARNS OF 'FINANCIAL APOCALYPSE' IF NAFTA 2.0 BOMBS: The National Pork Producers Council has become acutely aware of how much is at stake for U.S. pork if the NAFTA talks fail - or if pork becomes collateral damage as American negotiators push for gains in other areas.

"If we lose our tariff-free status, it will be a financial catastrophe for our producers," Nick Giordano, NPPC's vice president for global government affairs, told Pro Trade's Megan Cassella. "They will come with pitchforks and shovels for me, for NPPC leadership, and our elected officials will not escape unscathed."

Mexico said to be targeting pork: Giordano's comments came in response to a Reuters [report](#) on Friday that said Mexican negotiators were considering retaliating against a potential U.S. proposal involving seasonal produce by limiting the amount of pork the U.S. can export to its southern neighbor. Giordano said that while he had not heard of specific moves to retaliate by targeting U.S. pork, he was "not surprised."

A 'bargaining chip' for produce gains? The produce proposal in question, which POLITICO first reported last month, would make it easier for growers of fruits and vegetables to allege that Mexico is selling produce in the U.S. at below-market prices by allowing American producers in a given region to band together to bring anti-dumping and countervailing duty cases backed by seasonal data. "We're not a big fan of what the southeastern growers are trying to do, because there's always collateral damage at things like this," Giordano said. "We don't want to be a bargaining chip."

JAPAN REOPENS TO IDAHO CHIPPING POTATOES: The USDA on Friday announced that Japan would resume imports of Idaho chipping potatoes - a variety that's great for being fried into chips and fries - for the first time in 11 years. Japan had blocked imports of U.S. chipping potatoes after the pale cyst nematode, a wormy pest, was detected in southeastern Idaho in 2006.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has been working with Japanese officials to demonstrate the effectiveness of an eradication program for the pest. Exports from all Idaho counties except Bingham and Bonneville, which remain under quarantine, will resume with the 2018 season. American potatoes already account for 98 percent of the Japanese fresh and chilled market, which includes the chipping variety, with exports growing from \$1 million in 2010 to \$19 million in 2016.

N.Y. STATE OF MIND ON CROP DEVELOPMENT: A study by Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York shows that researchers have discovered new ways to increase plant breeding that are like using a dimmer switch to control a light bulb. The new approaches could apply to all types of food crops, including rice, wheat, maize and sorghum. What was the test fruit? The tomato.

NEW HIRE AT USDA'S COMMS SHOP: Secretary Perdue's press office has added Jake Wilkins, a veteran of the Republican National Committee's press shop who has also worked in multiple Senate offices. (h/t Playbook).

MA'S INSTANT OATS:

- McDonald's aims to make its Happy Meals healthier by replacing Minute Maid apple juice boxes with watered-down organic orange juice, The Wall Street Journal reports.

- As the Trump administration is reportedly considering reversing its course on the Paris climate accord, the EU and China are increasing coordination in the fight against climate change, Bloomberg reports. (The White House denied any backtracking on the Paris deal, however.)

- A Brucella outbreak that links back to raw milk from Texas has now expanded to seven states, Food Safety News reports.

THAT'S ALL FOR MA! See you again soon! In the meantime, drop your host and the rest of the team a line: cboudreau@politico.com and [@ceboudreau](https://twitter.com/ceboudreau); jhopkinson@politico.com and [@jennyhops](https://twitter.com/jennyhops); hbottemiller@politico.com and [@hbottemiller](https://twitter.com/hbottemiller); chaughney@politico.com and

[@chaughney](#); jlawinger@politico.com and [@jmlauinger](#); and P.J. Joshi, at pjoshi@politico.com and [@pjoshiny](#). Follow [@POLITICOPro](#) and [@Morning_Ag](#) on Twitter.

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-agriculture/2017/09/18/montana-barley-growers-look-to-mexico-222335>

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Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 10/11/2017 7:28:43 PM
Subject: RE: Pruitt

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ (Politico Pro, 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” (Seattle Times, 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. “Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” (NTK Network, Email Obtained

By FOIA, 07/26/17)

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 3:27 PM
To: Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Pruitt

Im not replying to this garbage, unless it is to say "This is nonsense"

From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 1:43 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Pruitt

His articles look like DNC blog posts.

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 1:40 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Pruitt

Ah, this is what I would call morbid:

<http://www.journalism.org/2013/06/03/newsweek-numbers/>

**Newsweek has not been audited since 2013 According to the Pew Research Center

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com] **On Behalf Of** Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Fri 8/4/2017 6:52:15 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Chamber Hill co-founder departs to launch new firm — Ukrainian tycoon hires second lobbying firm

By Theodoric Meyer | 08/04/2017 02:49 PM EDT

With David Beavers and Aubree Eliza Weaver

CHAMBER HILL CO-FOUNDER LAUNCHES NEW FIRM: **Michaela Sims**, a co-founder of **Chamber Hill Strategies**, has left to launch her own firm, **Sims Strategies**. Sims decided to strike out on her own after a conflict of interest between two clients at Chamber Hill that couldn't be resolved, she said in an interview. "It just made sense to split off," she said. Sims is also a veteran of the **Bockorny Group** and before that worked for former Sens. **Ben Nelson** and **Bob Kerrey**, both Nebraska Democrats. **Ted Prettyman** is also leaving Chamber Hill to join the firm as a director.

- Sims is bringing five Chamber Hill clients with her, most of them in the health care sector: the **American Academy of Adoption Attorneys**, **AMAG Pharmaceuticals**, the **National Association for the Support of Long Term Care**, **WellCare** and **GlaxoSmithKline**. The firm plans to focus on health and tax clients at the outset. (She's lobbying for the American Academy of Adoption Attorney on preserving the adoption tax credit, among other issues.) "I would say our sweet spot is issues that will go through the [Senate] Finance Committee" and the House Ways and Means Committee, Sims said. She's undaunted by the prospect of launching a Democratic firm - Prettyman previously worked for Sen. **Tom Carper** (D-Del.) - in Trump's Washington. "The party that's not in power is always going to be relevant - particularly in the Senate," Sims said. "I would be saying the same if it was a Democrat in the White House and a Democratic-controlled Congress."

UKRAINIAN TYCOONS HIRES A SECOND LOBBYING FIRM: **Igor Kolomoisky**, a Ukrainian tycoon who once called Russian President **Vladimir Putin** a "schizophrenic of short stature," has hired a second Washington lobbying firm - and a second former member of Congress - to lobby for him. Kolomoisky has signed former Rep. **John Sweeney** (R-N.Y.) of **SMW Partners** through a law firm representing him to lobby on "Business issues related to investments in the U.S.," according to a disclosure filing. Sweeney, who worked on Trump's transition interviewing hundreds of potential administration hires, did not respond to a request for comment.

- It's not clear what those "business issues" might be, but earlier filings provide a clue. Kolomoisky hired former Rep. **Phil English** (R-Pa.) of **Arent Fox** in January. English and another Arent Fox lobbyist, **Alex Manning**, have been lobbying for the issuance (presumably to Kolomoisky) of an E-2 visa, which allows foreigners to come to the United States temporarily if they invest in an American business. English declined to comment.

- Kolomoisky, it's safe to say, is more colorful than most lobbying clients. According to **The Wall Street Journal**, he spent millions of his own money to help arm Ukrainian forces fighting

Russian-backed separatists while serving as governor of Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region and "has a massive shark tank in his office." During a local TV appearance, Kolomoisky described Putin as a "schizophrenic of short stature" and "completely incapable, totally insane." "Mr. Putin, who stands 5 feet 7 inches, shot back, calling Mr. Kolomoisky a 'unique impostor' and expressing amazement that 'such a scoundrel could be appointed governor,'" the Journal reported in 2014.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. I'm off on Monday. PI will be in the capable hands of **David Beavers** and **Aubree Eliza Weaver**. Please send tips to dbeavers@politico.com and aweaver@politico.com. You can also follow us on Twitter: [@davidabeavers](https://twitter.com/davidabeavers), [@aubreeweaver](https://twitter.com/aubreeweaver) and [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

REPUBLICANS MAY TARGET MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTION: "A tax break popular with homeowners and the real estate industry could take a hit as Republicans look for ways to pay for their tax reform plan," **POLITICO's Colin Wilhelm** reports. "Despite promises from the Trump administration in April that it would 'protect the homeownership ... deductions,' multiple sources tracking tax reform said that the cap on the mortgage interest deduction - currently set at the interest on up to \$1 million of mortgage debt - could be lowered in tax reform." The **National Association of Realtors** - one of the biggest lobbying spenders in Washington - and the rest of the real estate industry have been working furiously to protect the tax break. Full story.

RAYTHEON ADDS ANOTHER: Raytheon has added another lobbying firm to its arsenal, signing **Ethan Cooper** of **HAKA** to lobby on "Defense of Hawaii - Missile Defense," per a disclosure filing. It's HAKA's first federal lobbying registration. Cooper previously spent eight years as a legal counsel on the Hill, where he specialized in nuclear nonproliferation work, according to HAKA's website. He did not respond to a request for comment. Raytheon's other lobbying firms include **American Continental Group**; **American Defense International**; **BGR Government Affairs**; **C. Baker Consulting**; **Capitol Tax Partners**; **DLA Piper**; **Etherton and Associates**; **Holland & Knight**; **Innovative Federal Strategies**; **O'Brien, Gentry & Scott**; and the **Vectre Corporation**.

SOFT MONEY STRIKES BACK: The **Center for Public Integrity's Carrie Levine** takes a look at the return of "soft money" through joint fundraising committees. When **Hillary Clinton's** main joint fundraising committee, for instance, "received a contribution, it divvied the money up among Clinton's campaign committee, the **Democratic National Committee** and a gaggle of state-level Democratic party committees. State Democratic parties then often shifted the money they received from Clinton's joint fundraising committee right to the Democratic National Committee, allowing the national committee to pocket significantly more cash than federal contribution limits would appear to allow.

- "Republicans did the same, an even higher percentage of the time: Republican state parties shifted more than 90 percent of the dollars they received from the **Trump Victory** committee to the **Republican National Committee**." Full story.

BULGARIAN LOBBYING FOR MAGNITSKY ACTION: "A Bulgarian ex-banker is

pushing to be the first case considered under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, a law passed by Congress that allows the government to levy sanctions in retaliation for human rights abuses and corruption," **The Hill's Megan Wilson** reports. "**Tsvetan Vassilev**, once named the most influential man in Bulgaria by **Forbes**, claims his country is persecuting him with false and politicized charges. He recently hired the Washington firm **JWI Inc** , signing a \$50,000 six-month contract, to help process an application to be considered under the Global Magnitsky Act. That law allows the U.S. government to place targeted sanctions on anyone who, among other things, retaliates against whistleblowers exposing government corruption." [Full story.](#)

HOW TRUMP'S FCC AIDED SINCLAIR'S EXPANSION: "**Sinclair Broadcast Group** is expanding its conservative-leaning television empire into nearly three-quarters of American households - but its aggressive takeover of the airwaves wouldn't have been possible without help from President **Donald Trump's** chief at the Federal Communications Commission," **POLITICO's Margaret Harding McGill** and **John Hendel** report. "Sinclair, already the nation's largest TV broadcaster, plans to buy [42 stations](#) from **Tribune Media** in cities like New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, on top of the [more than 170 stations](#) it already owns. It got a critical assist this spring from Republican FCC Chairman **Ajit Pai**, who revived a decades-old regulatory loophole that will keep Sinclair from vastly exceeding federal limits on media ownership."

- Sinclair has succeeded without spending a fortune on lobbying - and the company "isn't showing signs of massively boosting its bare-bones lobbying operation in Washington, though it's increasing its investment. The company spent roughly \$60,000 on lobbying in the first half of this year, nearly the amount it spent in all of 2016, and recently brought back a second, in-house lobbyist who previously lobbied for the broadcaster." [Full story.](#)

JOBS REPORT

- **Chris Alabi** has joined the **Center for Audit Quality** as a professional practice fellow. He was previously a senior manager at **PricewaterhouseCoopers**.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

None

NEW PACs:

Mountain State PAC (Super PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

David L. Horne, LLC: W.V. Hydro, Inc.
Harbinger Strategies, LLC: Lendmark Financial Services, LLC
Mr. Philip Klein: RB
Prime Policy Group: Pew Charitable Trust

Ryberg and Smith, L.L.C.: Kenya Association of Manufacturers
Squire Patton Boggs: Washington Convention Center Authority/EventsDC
The Smith-Free Group: ResCare, Inc.

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Hawk International, LLC: Hippocrates Institute (and the POP Campaign)
Karl Carter: Lucas Security
Thompson Advisory Group: 2030 Group
Thompson Advisory Group: Comstock Loudon Station LC [sic]
ULTRA Electronics Advanced Tactical Systems: ULTRA Electronics Advanced Tactical Systems

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-influence/2017/08/04/chamber-hill-co-founder-departs-to-launch-new-firm-221715>

To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings>

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Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Fri 11/3/2017 4:16:29 PM
Subject: RE: Definers - Is there an updated on this?

Our contracts office is in discussion with Definers to have them provide a quote and other necessary information. It will have to be posted on a government contracts site for 5 days; we hope that will be next week.

Thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Friday, November 03, 2017 12:06 PM
To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers - Is there an updated on this?

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Dennis, Brady
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:04:27 PM
Subject: RE: Hey

Thanks. Who was the additional vendor?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:02 PM
To: Dennis, Brady <Brady.Dennis@washpost.com>
Subject: Hey

Your story says it was a no-bid contract. That is not accurate and we have this on-the-record statement regarding that “no-bid” language:

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Jackie Toth[jackietoth@cqrollcall.com]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Molly Block[Molly.Block@mail.house.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:49:41 PM
Subject: RE: Q re: Definers contract

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Jackie Toth [mailto:jackietoth@cqrollcall.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:43 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Molly Block <Molly.Block@mail.house.gov>
Subject: Q re: Definers contract

Hi all,

Can we get confirmation that the EPA canceled the Definers contract? When will Definers' services be fully terminated? Does the EPA intend to issue a replacement contract, and will it be opened to a bid?

Deadline's no later than 3:30pm today, if possible.

Thanks much,
Jackie

Jackie Toth

CQ Legal

Energy & Environment Reporter/Analyst

O: 202-650-6518

C: 610-428-2276

@JackieTothDC

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To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]; Ford, Hayley[ford.hayley@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Fri 10/6/2017 8:54:08 PM
Subject: EPA Afternoon News Highlights 10.6.17
EPA Afternoon News Highlights 10.6.17.docx

EPA Afternoon News Highlights 10.6.17

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Phoenix Business Journal: EPA Chief: Obama Climate Change Policy 'Going Away'; Approves Arizona Plan For Haze, Coal Plant

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt is in Arizona today and confirmed the Trump administration is getting rid of one of the signature climate change policies set in place by former president Barack Obama. "It's going away," Pruitt said in an interview in Phoenix with the Business Journal. The Trump EPA plans on ending Obama's Clean Power Plan. That plan aimed to cut carbon emissions from power plants as part of the U.S. role in the international Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The Clean Power Plan rule, however, was challenged in court by more than two dozen states including Arizona and Pruitt when he served as Oklahoma attorney general, and its implementation was halted by the U.S. Supreme Court. Now, the EPA plans on ending the program saying it oversteps the agency's powers.

Bloomberg BNA: Trump Taps Former Inhofe Staffer For EPA's No. 2 Slot

Another former member of Oklahoma Sen. James Inhofe's (R-Okla.) team could soon be joining the EPA's leadership.

The Trump administration tapped Andrew Wheeler to serve as the Environmental Protection Agency's deputy administrator. Wheeler previously served under Inhofe as both staff director and chief counsel for the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. Wheeler currently works at the Faegre Baker Daniels, where he's lobbied on behalf of companies such as Murray Energy Corp., Energy Fuels Resources Inc., and Xcel Energy. Murray Energy declined to comment on Wheeler's nomination. Inhofe praised Wheeler's selection in a statement shortly following the White House's Oct. 5 announcement.

E&E News: Team Studying Regional Offices; No Revamp Decisions Yet — COO

A U.S. EPA team is evaluating the agency's network of 10 regional offices to find the best approach for delivering services but has not yet decided whether any downsizing is warranted, Chief of Operations Henry Darwin said in an interview this morning. The team, made up of both career and political appointees, is reviewing "what functions are performed where and why in an effort to try to find" the best model or means "by which we can deliver our mission in the remote areas of the country," Darwin said. Asked whether the review could lead to closure or consolidation of some offices, "I think it's too soon to make any kind of statement or conclusion," Darwin said. "We just simply aren't far enough along to know whether that will be part of our conclusions or recommendations" to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

The Hill: EPA To Argue Obama Climate Rule Violates Law: Report

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is reportedly set to repeal the Obama administration's landmark climate rule for power plants, arguing that it violates federal law. The EPA is planning to target the legality of the central tenant of the Clean Power Plan, Bloomberg reported, citing agency documents: that it directs states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions however they saw fit. Under the rule, the federal government set reduction carbon targets for states and then asked them to find ways to hit those targets on their own, rather than by regulating a single source of pollution. That means some states are planning to replace carbon-heavy coal power plants with cleaner energy such as natural gas or renewables.

E&E News: Trump Plans To Ax Obama Rule; No Replacement Yet

The Trump administration is proposing to repeal the Obama-era Clean Power Plan, arguing that the climate rule "exceeds the EPA's statutory authority," according to a copy of U.S. EPA's plans obtained by Politico. The announcement, long expected, will be formalized in a 43-page draft rule to rescind the Obama regulation aimed at clamping down on power plants' greenhouse gas emissions. The Trump EPA "has not yet determined" whether it will promulgate a replacement rule, according to the notice. EPA "is considering whether it is appropriate to propose such a rule and is intending to issue an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) in the near future," the notice says. The agency signaled, however, that its preference would be to regulate specific sources of emissions as opposed to the broader requirements of the Clean Power Plan, which sought to cut carbon dioxide 32 percent by 2030.

NTK Network: Dem Senator Questions EPA Nominee's 'Heart'

Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) questioned the "heart" of Trump EPA nominee Dr. Michael Dourson at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing on Wednesday. "I always care about surrounding myself with people who have a good mind, but also a good heart, and there's no question you have a good mind," Carper said to Dourson. The Delaware senator told the

nominee that he does not question his intellectual credentials. “There’s a question about your heart,” he added. “I don’t mind people saying to me that they think I’m dumb. I don’t like it, but what really hurts me is when they question my heart. And there’s really serious questions about your heart.”

The Daily Caller: Leaked Docs Lay Out EPA’s Plans For Repealing Obama’s Signature Global Warming Rule

The Trump administration will argue repealing the centerpiece of the Obama administration’s global warming agenda will lift a \$33 billion regulatory burden off the U.S. power sector, according to leaked documents. In the coming days, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will propose repealing the Clean Power Plan (CPP), and solicit public comment for what should replace it, according to a document obtained by Bloomberg. The document doesn’t lay out a plan to propose a replacement to the CPP, which the Obama administration relied on to build support for the Paris climate accord. A coalition of states, businesses and unions sued to have the regulation struck down shortly after it was proposed in 2015. EPA will argue the CPP is not only illegal, but would cost \$33 billion to comply with. EPA used a different calculation for the “social cost of carbon” metric to generate a new cost-benefit analysis

Reuters: Trump Picks Coal Lobbyist For EPA Deputy Role, Drawing Mixed Reaction

President Donald Trump on Thursday named Andrew Wheeler, a coal industry lobbyist and former congressional staffer, as his pick for deputy administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, prompting contrasting reactions from industry and environmental groups. The Sierra Club, an environmental group, called his nomination, which is subject to Senate confirmation, “absolutely horrifying,” while a coal industry group and some Republican politicians said he was well qualified for the job. The EPA said in a statement Wheeler had spent four years at the agency’s Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics during the George H. W. Bush and Clinton administrations, as well as many years on Capitol Hill, including as counsel for conservative Republican Senator James Inhofe. It said he currently works as a principal at FaegreBD Consulting, “providing guidance on federal regulatory and legislative environmental and energy issues.”

Breitbart: Exclusive: EPA Document Proposes To Eliminate Clean Power Plan ‘In Its Entirety’

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to repeal the agency’s Obama-era climate change program, the Clean Power Plan (CPP), “in its entirety,” according to a document obtained by Breitbart News. The 43-page document, titled, “Repeal of Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stations Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units” details

how the EPA plans to repeal CPP through a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). This version of the document obtained by Breitbart News remains subject to change through inter-agency review. The agency contends that the EPA, under former Administrator Gina McCarthy, exceeded its authority to regulate carbon emissions as stipulated by the Clean Air Act. The document proposes to eliminate the Clean Power Plan, and then suggested that they might release an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) that will reflect a more thoughtful and modest approach to regulating air pollution given the EPA's limited statutory authority. President Donald Trump signed an executive order in March ordering a review of the Clean Power Plan as well as other environmental regulations. Instead of Obama's stifling energy regulations, the Trump administration will promote policies that favor American "energy dominance."

National Afternoon News Highlights 10.6.17

The Washington Post: Trump Administration Narrows Affordable Care Act's Contraception Mandate

The Trump administration issued a rule Friday that sharply limits the Affordable Care Act's contraception coverage mandate, a move that could mean many American women would no longer have access to birth control free of charge. The new regulation, issued by the Health and Human Services Department, allows a much broader group of employers and insurers to exempt themselves from covering contraceptives such as birth control pills on religious or moral grounds. The decision, anticipated from the Trump administration for months, is the latest twist in a seesawing legal and ideological fight that has surrounded this aspect of the 2010 health-care law nearly from the start. Several religious groups, which battled the Obama administration for years over the controversial requirement, welcomed the action.

The Wall Street Journal: New Orleans Braces For Flooding Ahead Of Tropical Storm Nate

New Orleans officials are mobilizing police, firefighters, sewer workers and other staff to prepare for flooding ahead of Tropical Storm Nate, which forecasters expect will hit southeast Louisiana this weekend as a Category 1 hurricane. The city of 391,000 has spent months scrambling to repair equipment for its aging drainage system, following turbine and pump failures during heavy rain storms this July and August that caused severe flooding in parts of the city. Many residents had homes, shops and cars flooded. On Thursday, Mayor Mitch Landrieu said the city had 108 of its 120 pumps working. Louisiana National Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are helping the city prepare.

NO TRUMP TWEETS

Phoenix Business Journal

<https://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/news/2017/10/06/epa-chief-obama-climate-change-policy-going-away.html>

EPA Chief: Obama Climate Change Policy ‘Going Away’; Approves Arizona Plan For Haze, Coal Plant

By Mike Sunnucks, 10/6/17

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt is in Arizona today and confirmed the Trump administration is getting rid of one of the signature climate change policies set in place by former president Barack Obama.

“It’s going away,” Pruitt said in an interview in Phoenix with the Business Journal.

The Trump EPA plans on ending Obama’s Clean Power Plan. That plan aimed to cut carbon emissions from power plants as part of the U.S. role in the international Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The Clean Power Plan rule, however, was challenged in court by more than two dozen states including Arizona and Pruitt when he served as Oklahoma attorney general, and its implementation was halted by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Now, the EPA plans on ending the program saying it oversteps the agency’s powers.

Pruitt said one of his top priorities in keeping the EPA within existing laws and statutes and being less activist than the Obama administration.

“The last administration was punitive,” Pruitt said of Obama policies favoring renewable energy and looking to cut down on coal and carbon emissions.

Pruitt also announced today the EPA and Trump administration's approval of state plans dealing with haze and clean air.

That EPA move will help keep Salt River Project's coal-fired Coronado Generating Station stay open.

Previous Obama administration rulings could have prompted at least a partial shutdown of the 773-megawatt plant in far northeastern Arizona.

SRP has put environmental improvements into the plant.

Tempe-based SRP — one of the two big utilities in the Phoenix region — welcomed the move.

"The EPA decision is important for SRP customers and the state of Arizona as it reduces the plant's impact on regional haze while maintaining its ability to provide affordable and reliable power to our more than 1 million customers in the Valley," said SRP spokesman Scott Harelson.

Pruitt said the EPA's Arizona action shows the agency's willingness to work with states, utilities and others on regional issues.

He said the haze rule is more about visibility and "aesthetics" and not more public health-focused sections of federal law.

Pruitt said that state cooperation in policy making and regulatory decisions includes working with Democratic blue states as well as more Republican ones such as Arizona.

Pruitt also stressed the EPA's role in finding a balance between environmental stewardship and regulations and economic growth. He is in Phoenix today as part of the Trump administration promoting National Manufacturing Day.

He will also speak before the Arizona Manufacturers Council.

The EPA chief said businesses need "regulatory certainty" in order to invest and grow and that GDP growth and working with businesses is not contrary to the agency's regulatory and stewardship charges.

Environmentalists worry about the Trump administration and Republican Congress siding too much with industry when it comes to regulatory and issues such as climate change and emissions.

The Trump administration has already rolled back Obama regulations on coal.

Pruitt said its Congress' job to determine laws related to emissions, water and environmental protection and the EPA's job to enforce them within those laws.

And if federal policies or actions are onerous or arbitrary businesses will pull back, Pruitt contends.

"They just shrink back," Pruitt said.

Sandy Bahr, director of the Sierra Club's Grand Canyon Chapter, faulted the EPA's dismantling of the Clean Power Plan.

“The dismantling of the Clean Power Plan fails to recognize the value of clean energy development and how it benefits our communities,” said Bahr noting the years of planning, public outreach and feedback put into the policy.

The Obama plan looked to cut carbon dioxide emissions from U.S. power plants by 32 percent by 2020. It was part of U.S. efforts related the Paris climate accord and aimed to reduce asthma attacks and deaths and encourage other countries to also reduce emissions.

But it was challenged by states and others who argued it crossed the line of the EPA’s statutory and regulatory powers.

President Donald Trump — who is taking the U.S. out of the Paris accord — and the EPA have taken actions to end the power plan policy.

Pruitt said the EPA could roll back some other Obama policies he views as crossing the line on agency powers and that “pick winners and losers” in the energy sector.

Bahr said ending Clean Power Plan hurts clean energy development.

“For Arizona, especially, clean energy is key to our economic future, but for all of us,” Bahr said pointing to the public health benefits of lowering emissions. “Replacing the Clean Power Plan with a polluter-approved alternative that will harm our health and stall efforts to address climate change is irresponsible.”

Pruitt and other Trump administration officials' sometimes skeptical views on climate change as well as energy, automobile and business causes of it have been brought up by environmentalists and critics.

Pruitt said those questions which have been brought up at EPA confirmation and other hearings on Capitol Hill looks to put political “jerseys” on each side.

“I don’t see this as a blue, red issue,” said Pruitt citing work his agency is doing and ready to do with more Democratic states such as Minnesota and California.

Bloomberg BNA

http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split_display.adp?fedfid=121766634&vname=dennotallissues&fn=121766

Trump Taps Former Inhofe Staffer For EPA's No. 2 Slot

By Abby Smith, 10/6/17

Another former member of Oklahoma Sen. James Inhofe's (R-Okla.) team could soon be joining the EPA's leadership.

The Trump administration tapped Andrew Wheeler to serve as the Environmental Protection Agency's deputy administrator. Wheeler previously served under Inhofe as both staff director and chief counsel for the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Wheeler currently works at the Faegre Baker Daniels, where he's lobbied on behalf of companies such as Murray Energy Corp., Energy Fuels Resources Inc., and Xcel Energy.

Murray Energy declined to comment on Wheeler's nomination. Inhofe praised Wheeler's selection in a statement shortly following the White House's Oct. 5 announcement.

“There is no one more qualified than Andrew to help [EPA Administrator] Scott Pruitt restore EPA to its proper size and scope,” Inhofe said.

If confirmed, Wheeler will join several former Inhofe staffers filling the ranks at the EPA:

- Ryan Jackson, Pruitt's chief of staff, also previously served as Inhofe's chief of staff;
- Mandy Gunasekara, who served as majority counsel for the Senate environment committee under Inhofe, is Pruitt's top air adviser;
- Byron Brown, oversight counsel for the Senate environment committee during Inhofe's chairmanship, is Pruitt's deputy chief of staff; and
- Daisy Letendre, Inhofe's former communications director, serves as a senior policy and communications adviser.

Prior Experience

Wheeler's name was rumored for the EPA's No. 2 slot as early as March. In recent weeks, the Trump administration has been steadily moving to fill top positions at the EPA. Nominees to head the EPA's air, water, and toxics offices, as well as its legal team, recently faced Senate scrutiny during an Oct. 4 confirmation hearing.

During his time working for the Senate environment committee, Wheeler worked on major environment and energy-related legislation, including the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and the proposed Clear Skies Act. The latter was a centerpiece of the George W. Bush administration's air quality program and would have established an emissions trading system to cut nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and mercury pollution from power plants—though the legislation never advanced.

Wheeler started his career at the EPA, working for four years in the agency's toxics office during the George H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations.

Pruitt, in a statement, said Wheeler “will bring extraordinary credentials to EPA that will greatly

assist the agency as we work to implement our agenda.”

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060062949/>

Team Studying Regional Offices; No Revamp Decisions Yet — COO

By Sean Reilly, 10/6/17

A U.S. EPA team is evaluating the agency's network of 10 regional offices to find the best approach for delivering services but has not yet decided whether any downsizing is warranted, Chief of Operations Henry Darwin said in an interview this morning.

The team, made up of both career and political appointees, is reviewing "what functions are performed where and why in an effort to try to find" the best model or means "by which we can deliver our mission in the remote areas of the country," Darwin said.

Asked whether the review could lead to closure or consolidation of some offices, "I think it's too soon to make any kind of statement or conclusion," Darwin said. "We just simply aren't far enough along to know whether that will be part of our conclusions or recommendations" to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

Darwin, a former aide to Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey (R), arrived at EPA about three months ago to spearhead agency streamlining efforts. He did not give a timetable for completion of the review. In a follow-up email, an EPA spokesman only reiterated that the review is ongoing and that EPA's fiscal 2018 budget request does not support closing any offices.

Darwin's comments, however, appeared to at least crack the door to the possibility of restructuring the regional network, where close to half of EPA's 14,500 employees worked as of December, according to official figures.

Pruitt and other EPA officials have previously denied any discussions about shuttering regional offices. At a June congressional hearing, for example, Pruitt dismissed speculation that the Chicago-based Region 5 office would be merged with the Region 7 office in Kansas as "pure legend."

Even so, Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.) soon after introduced S. 1474, which would bar the use of any fiscal 2018 funding to close, consolidate or eliminate any EPA regional or program office. The bill has yet to get a hearing or markup from the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Under President Trump's fiscal 2018 budget proposal, EPA's funding would be slashed by roughly 30 percent, or more than \$2 billion, accompanied by a workforce cut of some 3,800 employees.

While lawmakers are unlikely to go along with any reductions of that magnitude, EPA has been under long-term pressure to save money with funding that has been largely stagnant in recent years. By early last month, more than 360 employees had accepted voluntary buyouts.

That was far short of the 1,227 total buyouts the agency was authorized to offer in fiscal 2017, which ended last week. Asked whether he foresees the need for another round of workforce reductions, through buyouts, early retirements or reductions in force, Darwin said, "We'll have to see how the budget plays out."

He added, "That's really more a budgetary issue than a strategic planning issue."

While Darwin was brought to EPA in part to expand efforts to incorporate "lean" management principles into operations, the concept is not a pretext for downsizing, he said.

"It's about becoming more efficient and being able to perform the work that you do better," he said, "not necessarily with less people." He acknowledged, however, one upshot of applying "lean" principles is often accomplishing more with less.

The concept figures prominently in a draft EPA long-term strategic plan released yesterday for public comment. Under Pruitt's leadership, "EPA will become a Lean organization," the draft says, with the resulting system intended to deliver measurable results, eliminate waste from processes, maximize customer value and save taxpayers money.

As head of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and then as Ducey's chief of operations, Darwin was closely involved in promoting "lean" principles. In 2014 testimony while he was still running ADEQ, Darwin largely agreed with critics who say agencies are poorly run, adding that "most systems of government are indeed a mess."

But rather than privatization, a better course might be to encourage agencies to operate more like corporations, Darwin suggested.

Under EPA's proposed strategic plan, for example, the agency will "leverage" feedback from surveys and advisory groups to find openings for streamlining business processes and will strive to "alleviate challenges associated with outdated or non-existent policies," according to the document.

EPA intends to send the final version of the plan to Congress in February in conjunction with its 2019 budget request. Asked whether he's uncovered any particular weaknesses in EPA's operations, Darwin said much of his work so far has been focused "on making sure that we're setting ourselves up for successes by measuring the right things."

In an echo of Pruitt's "back-to-basics" agenda, he singled out the need to return to the agency's original authorizing statutes and review Congress' intent in creating those programs. The agency will then attempt "to measure our results against those intentions."

The agency will release "aggressive targets" for achieving the measures laid out in the strategic plan with next year's proposed budget. To set those targets, he said, "we are currently working on baselining where we are on a lot of these measures."

Asked for examples, Darwin said one area in which more data are needed is how long EPA takes to issue permits. "We're gathering that data right now, and once we have that, I'll have a better sense of where we are operationally."

The draft plan also contains objectives — such as strengthening cybersecurity and upgrading employee training — that Darwin acknowledged could actually require more spending, but he added that he had not so far found any major funding needs.

Yesterday, President Trump nominated Andrew Wheeler to serve as EPA's deputy administrator. Across the federal government, the person holding that job typically assumes the role of chief operating officer (COO) for the agency.

But Darwin, who is also EPA's assistant deputy administrator, said that it was "very clear" in his conversations with Pruitt that he would continue to shoulder that responsibility

"So, I will remain as the COO for EPA," he said.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/354210-epa-to-argue-obama-climate-rule-violates-law-report>

EPA To Argue Obama Climate Rule Violates Law: Report

By Devin Henry, 10/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is reportedly set to repeal the Obama administration's landmark climate rule for power plants, arguing that it violates federal law.

The EPA is planning to target the legality of the central tenant of the Clean Power Plan, Bloomberg reported, citing agency documents: that it directs states to reduce greenhouse gas

emissions however they saw fit.

Under the rule, the federal government set reduction carbon targets for states and then asked them to find ways to hit those targets on their own, rather than by regulating a single source of pollution.

That means some states are planning to replace carbon-heavy coal power plants with cleaner energy such as natural gas or renewables.

But the EPA is now set to say that a regulation affecting the broader electricity sector is outside the agency's purview.

The EPA will argue that "the Clean Power Plan departed from this practice by instead setting carbon dioxide emission guidelines for existing power plants that can only realistically be effected by measures that cannot be employed to, for, or at a particular source," the documents say.

The argument is similar to one pursued by the Clean Power Plan's most ardent opponents, who sued against the proposal when it was finalized in 2015. That group includes current EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was then attorney general of Oklahoma.

Though the Supreme Court has frozen implementation of the rule, a federal court has not ruled on the validity of the claims from the attorneys general.

Officials will announce their intention to repeal the Clean Power Plan soon and solicit comments on how to replace it, if at all, according to reports.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/10/06/stories/1060062953>

Trump Plans To Ax Obama Rule; No Replacement Yet

By Robin Bravender, 10/6/17

The Trump administration is proposing to repeal the Obama-era Clean Power Plan, arguing that the climate rule "exceeds the EPA's statutory authority," according to a copy of U.S. EPA's plans obtained by Politico.

The announcement, long expected, will be formalized in a 43-page draft rule to rescind the Obama regulation aimed at clamping down on power plants' greenhouse gas emissions.

The Trump EPA "has not yet determined" whether it will promulgate a replacement rule, according to the notice.

EPA "is considering whether it is appropriate to propose such a rule and is intending to issue an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) in the near future," the notice says.

The agency signaled, however, that its preference would be to regulate specific sources of emissions as opposed to the broader requirements of the Clean Power Plan, which sought to cut carbon dioxide 32 percent by 2030.

The notice says EPA emission limits "must be something that physically or operationally changes the source itself, and that is taken at or applied to individual, particular sources."

Many industry groups have pushed the Trump administration to replace the Clean Power Plan with a narrower rule that requires efficiency standards at power plants.

EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said in a statement: "The Obama Administration pushed the bounds of their authority so far that the Supreme Court issued a stay — the first in history — to

prevent the so-called 'Clean Power Plan' from taking effect. Any replacement rule that the Trump Administration proposes will be done carefully and properly within the confines of the law."

The agency will argue that it has the ability to revisit existing regulations.

EPA "has inherent authority to reconsider, repeal or revise past decisions to the extent permitted by law so long as the Agency provides a reasoned explanation," the notice says.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/dem-senator-questions-epa-nominees-heart/>

Dem Senator Questions EPA Nominee's 'Heart'

No Author Listed, 10/5/17

Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) questioned the "heart" of Trump EPA nominee Dr. Michael Dourson at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing on Wednesday.

"I always care about surrounding myself with people who have a good mind, but also a good heart, and there's no question you have a good mind," Carper said to Dourson.

The Delaware senator told the nominee that he does not question his intellectual credentials.

"There's a question about your heart," he added. "I don't mind people saying to me that they think I'm dumb. I don't like it, but what really hurts me is when they question my heart. And there's really serious questions about your heart."

Carper quoted Maya Angelou in criticizing Dourson, and told him that people are "afraid" of his nomination.

Dourson's nomination has received praise from medical and environmental professionals across the country. Officials from the University of Nebraska, Michigan State, and the University of Minnesota have all offered support to his nomination, yet Carper finds it appropriate to personally attack Dourson.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/10/06/leaked-docs-lay-out-epas-plans-for-repealing-obamas-signature-global-warming-rule/>

Leaked Docs Lay Out EPA's Plans For Repealing Obama's Signature Global Warming Rule

By Michael Bastasch, 10/6/17

The Trump administration will argue repealing the centerpiece of the Obama administration's global warming agenda will lift a \$33 billion regulatory burden off the U.S. power sector, according to leaked documents.

In the coming days, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will propose repealing the Clean Power Plan (CPP), and solicit public comment for what should replace it, according to a document obtained by Bloomberg.

The document doesn't lay out a plan to propose a replacement to the CPP, which the Obama administration relied on to build support for the Paris climate accord. A coalition of states, businesses and unions sued to have the regulation struck down shortly after it was proposed in 2015.

EPA will argue the CPP is not only illegal, but would cost \$33 billion to comply with. EPA used a different calculation for the "social cost of carbon" metric to generate a new cost-benefit analysis

The document says the CPP will still yield “\$18.8 billion in energy efficiency benefits in 2030 and \$500 million in unrealized climate benefits,” Bloomberg reported.

“The Clean Power Plan departed from this practice by instead setting carbon dioxide emission guidelines for existing power plants that can only realistically be effected by measures that cannot be employed to, for, or at a particular source,” reads the EPA document.

“The Obama administration pushed the bounds of their authority so far that the Supreme Court issued a stay — the first in history — to prevent the so-called ‘Clean Power Plan’ from taking effect,” EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman told Bloomberg.

“Any replacement rule that the Trump administration proposes will be done carefully and properly within the confines of the law,” she said.

Environmentalists have already promised to file legal challenges against EPA to overturn any proposal they put forward. The Trump administration has been meeting with various stakeholders for months on possible CPP replacements.

The CPP aimed to cut carbon dioxide emissions from power plants 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and limit emissions from newly built plants as part of President Barack Obama’s commitment to the Paris climate accord.

The Obama administration pegged the CPP’s cost at \$8.4 billion, but the public health and “climate” benefits were pegged as high as \$54 billion.

Experts have quibbled over the Obama administration’s use of the “social cost of carbon” metric to justify the CPP, which was expected to force more coal-fired power plants to retire and shift the sector to be more natural gas and green energy-reliant.

The Obama EPA claimed the CPP would yield \$30 billion in “climate benefits” by 2030 resulting from reduced carbon dioxide emissions.

That was a controversial claim, and a working paper by the liberal Brookings Institution the EPA “shifted to a worldwide benefits approach, leading to a substantial increase in the estimated benefits.”

Basically, EPA counted the global benefits of reducing carbon dioxide as benefits enjoyed exclusively by Americans. Brookings fellows used a more traditional cost-benefit metric and found only \$2 billion and \$7 billion in climate benefits.

That means the Obama EPA inflated the CPP’s benefits between 4-fold and 15-fold.

Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-epa-wheeler/trump-picks-coal-lobbyist-for-epa-deputy-role-drawing-mixed-reaction-idUSKBN1CB014>

Trump Picks Coal Lobbyist For EPA Deputy Role, Drawing Mixed Reaction

By Eric Walsh, 10/6/17

President Donald Trump on Thursday named Andrew Wheeler, a coal industry lobbyist and former congressional staffer, as his pick for deputy administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, prompting contrasting reactions from industry and environmental groups.

The Sierra Club, an environmental group, called his nomination, which is subject to Senate confirmation, “absolutely horrifying,” while a coal industry group and some Republican politicians said he was well qualified for the job.

The EPA said in a statement Wheeler had spent four years at the agency’s Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics during the George H. W. Bush and Clinton administrations, as well as

many years on Capitol Hill, including as counsel for conservative Republican Senator James Inhofe.

It said he currently works as a principal at FaegreBD Consulting, “providing guidance on federal regulatory and legislative environmental and energy issues.”

Inhofe said in the statement that no one is more qualified than Wheeler to help EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt “restore EPA to its proper size and scope.”

The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, an industry lobby group, called Wheeler extraordinarily qualified for the job, saying in a statement: “His understanding of a wide range of environmental policies and the policy development process — combined with his thoughtfulness, judgment and temperament — will enable him to be an outstanding Deputy Administrator.”

But the Sierra Club called his nomination “absolutely horrifying,” adding in a statement: “Andrew Wheeler is a big time lobbyist who has represented Big Coal for almost a decade, including in numerous lawsuits challenging the EPA. He is a friend to polluters, not to American families that rely on clean air and clean water.”

Pruitt led 14 lawsuits against the agency when he was Oklahoma’s attorney general, and has said he is not convinced that carbon dioxide from human activity is the main driver of climate change, a position widely embraced by scientists.

He was appointed by President Donald Trump, a climate change doubter, who campaigned on a pledge to boost the U.S. oil and gas drilling and coal mining industries by reducing regulation.

He also promised to pull Washington out of a global pact to fight climate change, which he did in June.

Breitbart

<http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2017/10/06/exclusive-epa-document-proposes-eliminate-clean-power-plan-entirety/>

Exclusive: EPA Document Proposes To Eliminate Clean Power Plan ‘In Its Entirety’

By Sean Moran, 10/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to repeal the agency’s Obama-era climate change program, the Clean Power Plan (CPP), “in its entirety,” according to a document obtained by Breitbart News.

The 43-page document, titled, “Repeal of Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stations Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units” details how the EPA plans to repeal CPP through a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). This version of the document obtained by Breitbart News remains subject to change through inter-agency review.

The agency contends that the EPA, under former Administrator Gina McCarthy, exceeded its authority to regulate carbon emissions as stipulated by the Clean Air Act. The document proposes to eliminate the Clean Power Plan, and then suggested that they might release an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) that will reflect a more thoughtful and modest approach to regulating air pollution given the EPA’s limited statutory authority.

President Donald Trump signed an executive order in March ordering a review of the Clean Power Plan as well as other environmental regulations. Instead of Obama’s stifling energy regulations, the Trump administration will promote policies that favor American “energy dominance.”

The Obama administration designed the Clean Power Plan to lower carbon emissions from existing power plants by 2030 to 32 percent below 2005 levels. Conservatives widely viewed the Clean Power Plan, along with the Paris Climate Treaty, to be part of Obama’s “war on coal.”

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt criticized the Clean Power Plan earlier this year, calling the

regulation, “unlawful.” Pruitt said, “This is an effort to undo the unlawful approach the previous administration engaged in,” he said of the president’s executive order, “and to do it right going forward with the mindset of being pro-growth and pro-environment.”

Myron Ebell, the Competitive Enterprise Institute’s (CEI) director of Energy and Environment programs and Trump administration EPA transition chair, argued that the Clean Power Plan remains illegal and would do devastating harm to the average American. Ebell said, “In particular, we applaud his action to begin withdrawing the EPA’s greenhouse gas rules, including the so-called ‘Clean Power’ Plan. These rules, which are clearly illegal, would raise electric rates for consumers significantly and do immense economic damage to the heartland states where U.S. manufacturing is now concentrated.”

The EPA document declares that they are “proposing to repeal the CPP in its entirety.”

The EPA contends in the document, under former Administrator Gina McCarthy, exceeded its statutory authority under the Clean Air Act to force states and power plants to comply with the Clean Power Plan’s regulation to lower carbon emissions.

Over 150 interested parties sued the EPA, including 27 states, 24 trade associations, 37 rural electric co-ops, and three labor unions sued the former EPA administration in the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, arguing that the CPP was unconstitutional. A bipartisan group of 34 Senators and 171 members of the House filed an amicus brief arguing that the CPP was illegal and skirted Congress’ authority to legislate on environmental issues.

In February 2016, the Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the CPP pending further review. On August 8, 2017 the court issued an order holding the case in abeyance for a 60-day review and directed the EPA to file status updates at 30-day intervals.

In March, President Donald Trump issued an executive order which the document cites, which affirms the “national interest to promote clean and safe development of our Nation’s vast energy resources, while at the same time avoiding regulatory burdens that unnecessarily encumber energy production, constrain economic growth, and prevent job creation.”

The Executive order also directed the EPA to “immediately review existing regulations that potentially burden the development or use of domestically produced energy and appropriately suspend, revise, or rescind, those that unduly burden the development of domestic energy resources beyond the degree necessary to protect the public interest or otherwise comply with the law.” Subsequently, the EPA conducted a review of its environmental regulations, including the agency’s Clean Power Plan.

The EPA contends that their initial review of the CPP “raised substantial concerns that the CPP is not consistent with the policy articulated in Section 1 of the Executive Order.”

The EPA explained, “For example, numerous States, regulated entities and other stakeholders warned that the CPP threatened to impose massive costs on the power sector and consumers; invaded traditional areas of state regulation over the mix of energy generation within their borders, departed radically from prior regulatory practice and longstanding reading of the statute; and did not adequately ensure the national interest in affordable, reliable electricity, including from coal generation.”

The EPA contends in the proposed rulemaking that the EPA’s ability to “revisit existing regulations is well-grounded in the law.” The document cites *Chevron U.S.A. v. NRDC, Inc.*, *National Cable & Telecommunications Ass’n v. Brand X Internet Services*, and the *Clean Air Council v. Pruitt* cases to argue that the agencies have broad discretion to reconsider agency regulations at any time.

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) contains a cost-benefit analysis that examines repealing Obama’s Clean Power Plan. The EPA estimates that repealing CPP would provide up to \$33 billion in avoided compliance costs in 2030.

EPA Administrator Pruitt’s Scott decision to eliminate Obama’s Clean Power Plan serves as part of President Trump’s agenda to unravel Obama’s environmental legacy and pursue an America First policy of “energy dominance.”

In May, President Trump announced that the United States will withdraw from the 2015 Paris Climate Accord. The president said, “In order to fulfill my solemn duty to protect America and

its citizens, the United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord.” Trump cited that the Paris Climate Accord alone could cost America 2.7 million lost jobs by 2025. Similarly to the Clean Power Plan, Obama acted unilaterally without the consent of Congress and the American people to implement his climate agenda through the Paris Climate Accord.

Now EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was one of the first Attorneys General to sue the EPA over the Clean Power Plan, can start to repeal one of Obama’s hallmark environmental programs.

EPA spokesperson Liz Bowman said in a statement to Breitbart News, “While we can’t comment on the authenticity of the document, what we can say is that the Obama Administration pushed the bounds of their authority so far that the Supreme Court issued a stay – the first in history – to prevent the so-called ‘Clean Power Plan’ from taking effect. Any replacement rule that the Trump Administration proposes will be done carefully and properly within the confines of the law.”

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/trump-administration-could-narrow-affordable-care-acts-contraception-mandate/2017/10/05/16139400-a9f0-11e7-92d1-58c702d2d975_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_birthcontrol-1124am%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.175aa928ead8

Trump Administration Narrows Affordable Care Act’s Contraception Mandate

By Juliet Eilperin, Amy Goldstein and William Wan, 10/6/17

The Trump administration issued a rule Friday that sharply limits the Affordable Care Act’s contraception coverage mandate, a move that could mean many American women would no longer have access to birth control free of charge.

The new regulation, issued by the Health and Human Services Department, allows a much broader group of employers and insurers to exempt themselves from covering contraceptives such as birth control pills on religious or moral grounds. The decision, anticipated from the Trump administration for months, is the latest twist in a seesawing legal and ideological fight that has surrounded this aspect of the 2010 health-care law nearly from the start.

Several religious groups, which battled the Obama administration for years over the controversial requirement, welcomed the action.

Women's rights organizations and some medical professionals portrayed it as a blow to women's health, warning that it could lead to a higher number of unintended pregnancies.

The rule change is among the recent moves by President Trump to dismantle initiatives enacted under the Obama administration. It fulfills a crucial promise Trump made as a candidate to appeal to social conservatives and that he repeated in May when he signed an executive order in the Rose Garden to expand religious liberty.

Senior Health and Human Services officials, briefing reporters early on condition of anonymity, contended the change will still leave "99.9 percent of women" with access to free birth control through their insurance. They said the estimate was based on the finite number of groups that have filed about 50 lawsuits over the provision.

This latest rewriting of the federal policy, in an interim final rule that takes effect immediately, broadens the entities that may claim religious objections to providing contraceptive coverage to nonprofit organizations and for-profit companies, even ones that are publicly traded. Also included are higher educational institutions that arrange for insurance for their students, as well as individuals whose employers are willing to provide health plans consistent with their beliefs.

A separate section covers moral objections, allowing exemptions under similar circumstances except for publicly traded companies.

As part of the rule, made publicly available in the Federal Register late Friday morning, administration officials estimate that 120,000 women at most will lose access to free contraceptives — many fewer than critics predict.

They write that they do not know how many employers or insurers that omitted contraceptive

coverage before the ACA did so based on religious beliefs that would now allow them to be exempt. For that reason, the law says, HHS cannot predict how many entities will want exemptions, other than the groups that have filed recent lawsuits or made other public statements against the Obama-era policy.

The analysis concludes that perhaps one-third of women who get insurance through such groups — the estimated 120,000 — would end up paying for birth control on their own.

The new policy “will result in some persons covered in plans of newly exempt entities not receiving coverage or payments for contraceptive services,” the rule acknowledges. But it says there is not “sufficient data to determine the actual effect . . . on plan participants and beneficiaries, including for costs they may incur for contraceptive coverage, nor of unintended pregnancies that may occur.”

The controversy first arose as part of the Obama administration’s initial definition of preventive care that insurers must cover under the ACA — which encompassed birth control, officials decided.

Subsequent accommodations gave exemptions of sorts to houses of worship, nonprofits with religious affiliations and closely held for-profit companies. Such employers have been able to opt out of providing the coverage and instead have their insurance company pay for it by notifying the insurer, a third-party administrator or the federal government. That situation will continue.

Organizations affiliated with the Catholic Church, which teaches against birth control other than by natural means, have been among the most vocal opponents. They’ve argued that having to cover the cost of contraception through health insurance plans is tantamount to being forced by the government to be complicit in a sin.

In the past several years, lawsuits have been filed by nuns, Catholic charities, hospitals and universities. Even now, litigation remains in several federal appeals courts.

One challenge was heard by the Supreme Court, and the justices ruled in 2014 that it was illegal to impose the mandate on “closely held corporations” such as Hobby Lobby, the craft store chain. Its Christian owners had objected to the idea of paying for several kinds of the birth control that must be covered.

Despite HHS’s officials 99.9 percent prediction, no one knows how many companies and institutions will now claim an exemption and, in turn, how many women will lose access to no-cost birth control.

The new rule is almost certain to spark fresh litigation. The National Women’s Law Center — which estimates that in 2013 alone, the contraception requirement saved women \$1.4 billion in oral contraceptive costs — has vowed to challenge the Trump administration in court. It plans to argue that the new policy amounts to sex discrimination, since it will disproportionately affect women. It also plans to allege religious discrimination, arguing that it will allow employers to impose their religious beliefs on employees.

“The Trump administration is treating birth control as if it’s not even health care. We see this as part of the larger war they are waging on women’s health,” said Mara Gandal-Powers, senior counsel at the National Women’s Law Center. “For some [women], it means choosing between preventive care like contraceptives and paying their rent, their mortgage, electric bill.”

Other groups focused on a different issue, with Anne Davis of Physicians for Reproductive Health arguing that the widened exemptions will leave many women “vulnerable to the whim of their employers. ... An employer’s beliefs have no place in these private decisions, just as they would not in any other conversation about a patient’s health care.”

The rule follows some social conservatives’ increasing frustration with the pace at which the Trump administration has addressed their demands on issues such as the ACA contraception requirement. “An awful lot of people who voted for this president did so believing this was going to be something he would solve,” said Mark Rienzi, senior counsel for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, who hailed the rule as a correction of overly aggressive liberal actions under President Barack Obama. “There are other ways to get contraceptives. You don’t need to force nuns to give people contraception.”

In his sweeping May 4 executive order on free speech and religious liberty, Trump directed his Cabinet to address the concerns of those who had “conscience-based objections” to contraceptive coverage.

In previewing the rule for reporters, Roger Severino, director of HHS’s office for civil rights and a longtime proponent of religious liberties, reiterated Trump’s May pledge from the Rose Garden. The president had promised that “we will not allow people of faith to be targeted, bullied or silenced any more . . . We are ending the attacks on religious liberties.”

On Friday, Severino elaborated: “That was a promise made, and this is the promise kept. . . . We should have space for organizations to live out their religious identity and not face discrimination because of their faith.”

The HHS regulation was not the only administration action along these lines to be announced on Friday. Minutes later, Attorney General Jeff Sessions issued sweeping guidance to all executive departments and agencies on the Justice Department’s interpretation of religious liberties. That also triggered an immediate backlash, with civil liberties groups asserting that he was essentially offering a license for discrimination.

Senior Justice Department officials said the guidance was merely meant to offer interpretation and clarification of existing law. But the interpretation seemed to be particularly favorable to religious entities, possibly at the expense of women, LGBT people and others.

The guidance, for example, said the ACA contraceptive mandate “substantially burdens” employers’ free practice of religion by requiring them to provide insurance coverage for contraceptive drugs in violation of their religious beliefs or face significant fines.

Over the summer, a leaked early draft of the regulation began circulating in Washington, priming both sides for a renewed fight. That draft immediately drew praise from one side and condemnation from the other.

When the contraception mandate was first implemented in August 2012, it required all health

insurance offered by employers to cover at least one of the 18 forms of birth control approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Since then, savings on the birth control pill have accounted for more than half of the drop in all out-of-pocket prescription drug spending, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-orleans-braces-for-flooding-ahead-of-tropical-storm-nate-1507295025>

New Orleans Braces For Flooding Ahead Of Tropical Storm Nate

By Cameron McWhirter, 10/6/17

New Orleans officials are mobilizing police, firefighters, sewer workers and other staff to prepare for flooding ahead of Tropical Storm Nate, which forecasters expect will hit southeast Louisiana this weekend as a Category 1 hurricane.

The city of 391,000 has spent months scrambling to repair equipment for its aging drainage system, following turbine and pump failures during heavy rain storms this July and August that caused severe flooding in parts of the city. Many residents had homes, shops and cars flooded.

On Thursday, Mayor Mitch Landrieu said the city had 108 of its 120 pumps working. Louisiana National Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are helping the city prepare.

By 11 a.m. Friday, Tropical Storm Nate, with maximum sustained winds of 50 miles an hour, was heading toward Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, according to the National Hurricane Center. Central American officials linked the storm to at least 21 deaths in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras amid flooding and heavy rains, according to the Associated Press.

The storm is forecast to head north across the Gulf of Mexico as a tropical storm Saturday, according to the center, before strengthening to a Category 1 hurricane when it reaches the

northern Gulf on Saturday evening, according to Friday's forecast. The Center has issued hurricane warnings for the Gulf Coast from Grand Isle, La., to the Alabama-Florida border.

Authorities throughout the region have started preparations. Florida Gov. Rick Scott on Thursday declared a state of emergency in 29 western counties. Governors in Alabama and Louisiana have declared states of emergency.

"High water is already a problem in many southeast Louisiana parishes," said Louisiana emergency management official Jim Waskom. "High tides and easterly winds in recent days are impacting some areas ahead of the storm. Those conditions may worsen over the weekend."

Mr. Landrieu, New Orleans's mayor, said Thursday Nate was forecast to bring high winds and about 3 to 6 inches of rain to Louisiana's largest city starting Saturday. Some coastal areas could see flooding, he said.

"There is no reason to panic, but there is reason to prepare," said Mr. Landrieu, who declared a state of emergency.

Most of New Orleans sits just below sea level, and the city has long been plagued with periodic flooding, notably in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when surging water breached levees causing devastating flooding.

The problems with the drainage system this summer were made worse by conflicting reports from New Orleans Sewerage & Water Board officials about how many pumps were operating during heavy rain storms this summer, and at what capacity. Mr. Landrieu called for several board officials to resign and replaced staff of the entity. The city used emergency funds to expedite equipment repairs and buy backup generators to power the city's pumps.

Ahead of Nate, the city is sending out crews to clean catch basins and other parts of the drainage system. Police are setting up barricades to block traffic at underpasses prone to flooding, Mr. Landrieu said. He urged residents not to drive through standing water.

Mr. Landrieu said residents and tourists should plan to stay indoors during the storm. Festivals or other events planned this weekend will have to be postponed, he said. The city placed boats and high-water vehicles around the city for rescues if needed.

Longtime resident Nate Burgess, 49 years old, who co-owns a motorcycle repair shop with his brother, said his shop didn't flood this summer, but the street where his brother lives flooded and "actually floated his car up to his house."

He was skeptical the pump system would be ready if a major storm hit, considering the problems the city had this summer. He blamed those drainage failures on "gross negligence."

"Twelve years after Katrina, every pump should be working," he said.

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 6/27/2017 8:52:23 PM
Subject: Definers

Where are we on setting up a call with Joe. I really don't need to do a call, I know the quality of their product. Last night a story about in the NYT and would've been nice to have someone at the helm to send that out as it happened.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: AO OPA OMR CLIPS[AO_OPA_OMR_CLIPS@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Tue 2/27/2018 9:04:02 PM
Subject: News Clips - 27 February 2018

(Full stories, highlights, and details are listed further down in the email, and can be jumped to by clicking on any of the links below.)

[E&E Greenwire - Pruitt makes his mark on environmental justice](#)

[The Hill - Major EPA reorganization will end science research program](#)

[E&E Greenwire - Agency moves to disband environmental research operation](#)

[Reuters - Big Corn says 'no deal' after White House biofuels meeting](#)

[E&E Greenwire - Groups say EPA illegally lowered oxygen requirements in La.](#)

[E&E Greenwire - Supreme Court won't review Bush-era 'transfers' rule](#)

[E&E Greenwire - EPA rejects challenges to TVA plant permit](#)

[The Hill - Farm groups urge Trump to keep federal biofuel mandate](#)

[San Francisco Chronicle - Cutbacks, policy shifts pummel morale at EPA office in SF](#)

E&E Greenwire - Md. lawmakers urge boycott of Pa. over pollution

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E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060074909/search?keyword=EPA>

Pruitt makes his mark on environmental justice

By Kevin Bogardus, 2/27/18

Environmental justice is getting a twist at U.S. EPA, looking to incorporate some of the themes emphasized by Administrator Scott Pruitt.

Samantha Dravis, Pruitt's top policy aide, penned a memo dated this past Friday outlining EPA's priorities for the environmental justice program. The document lists a dozen goals guided by Pruitt's refrains of "core mission," "cooperative federalism" and "rule of law."

Dravis said in her memo that the agency's dedication to environmental justice "remains strong" and is committed to ensure that "all Americans see the full benefit of environmental protection and have a voice in our work and decisions."

"This is as true today — with Administrator Pruitt's emphasis on cleaning up Superfund sites and

aggressively attacking exposure to lead," Dravis said, as when President Clinton signed an executive order in 1994 to have all federal agencies address environmental justice concerns.

Dravis also noted the move of EPA's Office of Environmental Justice into its Office of Policy, which she leads. That reorganization has attracted criticism from former EPA officials who question the Trump administration's belief in the movement (Climatewire, Sept. 6, 2017).

In her memo, Dravis called the move "a reaffirmation" of Pruitt's commitment to EPA's environmental justice program.

"Elevating OEJ into OP will strengthen and complement our EJ work with the activities of many other offices, enabling EPA to provide better support to communities as we work to improve health, protect the environment and grow local economies for all people," Dravis said.

EPA's focus on environmental justice comes as its own scientists show how minorities and those in poverty are more likely to deal with harmful air pollution. A study published last week by EPA researchers found that "non-whites and those living in poverty face a disproportionate burden from [particulate-matter]-emitting facilities" (Greenwire, Feb. 26).

In her memo, Dravis outlines several steps for the environmental justice program, including achieving "measurable environmental outcomes" for underserved communities on reducing exposure to lead, waste contamination and air pollution, as well as ensuring safe drinking water. In addition, the agency has requested that members of its National Environmental Justice Advisory Council bring their regional concerns to Pruitt's attention for their first in-person meeting in 2018.

EPA's policy office also will launch in the next month "a convening of senior leadership" under the Environmental Justice and Community Revitalization Council, rebranded from the National Environmental Justice Council. EPA's top officials will discuss how the agency's priorities for the program will align with its new strategic plan.

"We have cemented EJ as not just an ideal to be achieved. It is a deeply rooted commitment that

helps us better achieve our mission to protect the environment and public health through collaboration, cooperative federalism and meaningful engagement," Dravis said.

Pruitt has shown an interest in environmental justice, having met with NEJAC members this past December. He also credited the work of civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr. for providing "the roots for the environmental justice movement, ensuring the rights to a clean and healthy environment for all of our citizens" in an internal email to staff (E&E News PM, Jan. 16).

The Trump administration's first budget proposal, however, sought to eliminate EPA's environmental justice office, proposing zero funds for the program in fiscal 2018.

In fiscal 2019, instead of ending the office, Trump requested \$2 million for the environmental justice program. That money would be used to fund its small grants, technical assistance and its EJSCREEN tool, which maps where environmental dangers are in one's community, all now housed within the policy shop.

Still, even with those funds proposed to be added back in, critics of the Trump administration say it is not enough for the environmental justice program. An analysis by the Environmental Protection Network, made up of former federal and state environmental officials, said the program along with other EPA initiatives "are now proposed for such drastic cuts that they are virtually eliminated."

Fiscal 2018 funding has still not been approved by Congress, but House and Senate appropriations bills for this fiscal year would send more money to EPA's environmental justice program — more than \$5.7 million in the House legislation while nearly \$6.1 million in the Senate version.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/regulation/energy-environment/375725-major-epa-reorganization-will-end-science-research-program>

Major EPA reorganization will end science research program

By Miranda Green, 2/26/18, 8:49 PM

A federal environmental program that distributes grants to test the effects of chemical exposure on adults and children is being shuttered amidst a major organization consolidation at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The National Center for Environmental Research (NCER) will no longer exist following plans to combine three EPA offices, the agency confirmed to The Hill on Monday.

The program provides millions of dollars in grants each year.

Perhaps best known for its handling of fellowships that study the effects of chemicals on children's health, the NCER will be dissolved and science staff serving there will be reassigned elsewhere within the department, the EPA said.

The merger will involve the EPA's Office of Administrative and Research Support, Office of Program Accountability and Resource Management, and the grants and contracts managed by the NCER to create a new Office of Resource Management.

Other EPA functions consolidated into the new office include the handling of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, records management and budget formulation functions.

An EPA spokesperson said the extensive organizational changes are meant to create more efficiency within the agency.

“EPA’s Office of Research and Development is one of the world’s leading environmental and human health research organizations. In order to maintain the quality and focus of our research, senior leaders from the research and development office are proactively taking steps to create management efficiencies within the organization,” the spokesperson said. “These changes will help EPA’s Office of Research and Development be more responsive to agency priorities and funding realities.”

The White House’s fiscal 2018 and 2019 budgets both proposed zeroing out major programs under the NCER, but the cuts were not taken up in the most recent congressional budget.

An EPA spokesperson said that under the planned overhaul, employees currently working at the NCER will not be fired, but may have their positions altered.

“At the appropriate time, the science staff currently in NCER will be redeployed to the [Office of Research and Development] labs/centers/offices matching their expertise to organizational needs. This reorganization could result in a change of positions or functions. Staff in the affected organizations will retain the grade and career ladder of their position of record,” the spokesperson said.

The NCER is largely known for the funding it provides through its premiere program, Science To Achieve Results (STAR). Under the STAR program, grants are given to the Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research Centers, which were established in 1988 to discover methods to reduce children's health risks from environmental factors.

“Those programs have been so successful in advancing our scientific understanding and our ability to address the ways that environmental chemicals can impact children’s health,” said Tracey Woodruff, a former senior scientist and policy adviser at the EPA under the Clinton and Bush administrations. “The children centers were really the first and only centers to uncover the relationship with prenatal exposure to flame retardants and IQ deficiencies in children.”

A report released by the National Academy of Sciences last year that was compiled at the EPA’s request championed the STAR program for its “numerous successes.”

"STAR has had numerous successes, such as in research on human health implications of air pollution, on environmental effects on children's health and well-being, on interactions between climate change and air quality, and on the human health implications of nanoparticles. Those are just a few examples; many more could be cited," the report read.

A former EPA official who worked within the NCER said the loss of the STAR program would be harmful to both the EPA and national science.

"The program was designed to not provide direct benefits to the agency but to the public. Without the STAR grants program there is a loss of an environmental agency that will look at both environmental and human health issues and to examine environmental issues of the future," the source cautioned.

Woodruff called the decision to merge the NCER with the other offices, which currently do not focus on handling grants, extremely concerning.

"They make it sound like this is a way to create efficiency, but it masks what's happening to this actually programmatic, scientific function of NCER and the STAR program. That makes you think, is this really just an efficiency argument masking their real intention to get rid of the research grant program, which they have said they want to do in the past?" she said. "Answering FOIAs and administering scientific grants are not the same thing."

The EPA has recently acknowledged a slow-down in the rate of FOIA requests answered, citing a backlog in previous requests made under the Obama administration and an uptick in FOIA requests sent since President Trump took office.

The EPA official did not acknowledge how the agency rearrangement may address those issues.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060074913/search?keyword=EPA>

Agency moves to disband environmental research operation

By Corbin Hiar, 2/27/18

U.S. EPA is planning to shut down a grant-making center that supports leading-edge research on human exposure to pollution and its effects.

Under the proposed consolidation, the grants, contracts and administrative functions of the National Center for Environmental Research (NCER) — a component of EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) — would be combined with two other offices focused on administering grants.

A new Office of Resource Management would then be responsible for some NCER functions, as well as the work of the offices of Administration and Research Support and of Program Accountability and Resource Management. Freedom of Information Act requests, records management and budget formulation functions from other organizations would also be moved into the planned resource management shop.

Liz Bowman, EPA's associate administrator for public affairs, described the prospective shake-up as an efficiency move.

The change would shift "staff to the labs and offices where their expertise is most effective," she said in a statement. "This potential reorganization would not affect anyone's employment or status, and the management of research grants will continue."

Contrary to an initial report in The Hill that described the consolidation as a done deal, Bowman

said the plan is still in its preliminary phase.

"ORD leadership is currently holding listening sessions with staff across the country to discuss this proposal, so everyone can work together to develop the best organization possible," she said.

The consolidation under consideration has been in the works for many months, according to Robert Kavlock, the former acting head of ORD who retired last November after 40 years at EPA.

"Its functions would still be in the organization but redeployed to make it more efficient, given the resource constraints and the hiring freeze," Kavlock told E&E News.

After years of falling support for NCER science grants such as the Science to Achieve Results, or STAR, program, the question became whether the agency needed a separate center to administer the grants, or whether it should just shift that support function back into other parts of ORD, Kavlock said.

"This is not a [Scott] Pruitt doing," he said, referring to the EPA administrator. "There has been a continual loss of funding for the STAR grants program."

Funding for the STAR program peaked in 2002 at around \$138 million, when controlled for inflation, a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine review found last year. In 2016, the funding for the program had fallen to \$36 million.

The National Academies recommended "that EPA continue to use STAR to respond to the nation's emerging environmental challenges," but the Trump administration's budget requests have twice called for its elimination.

Chris Zarba, a former acting head of NCER who left the center in 2012, also wasn't taken aback by the news that Pruitt is now looking to fold the program into another office.

"This is not a surprise," he said in an email. Zarba, who recently retired from the director role at EPA's Science Advisory Board Staff Office, noted funding for the STAR program had been dwindling "for quite some time," mainly because it was the easiest way to cut ORD's budget.

"Rent, salaries are fixed cost so when reductions came in recent years there was [nowhere] else to go for the money," he wrote.

Other former EPA leaders are taking a wait-and-see approach to the proposed consolidation.

"The organization is less relevant than making sure that really important function of support for science continues," Thomas Burke, the Obama-era head of ORD, told E&E News.

But Burke, who now teaches at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, remains concerned about the move, in light of previous actions by Pruitt that he thinks have weakened EPA's Scientific Advisory Board and put the independence of the agency's chemical assessment program at risk.

"Is this another assault on the scientific capacity of the nation to address emerging environmental problems, or is this truly a step forward in organization and accountability and independence of science?" Burke asked. "That's the important question, and that I don't know."

Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biofuels-trump/big-corn-says-no-deal-after-white-house-biofuels-meeting-idUSKCN1GB1FZ>

Big Corn says 'no deal' after White House biofuels meeting

By Jarrett Renshaw, 2/27/18, 7:04 AM

(Reuters) - A meeting between President Donald Trump and senators representing both the oil and corn industries failed to yield an agreement on how best to lower the cost of the United States' biofuels policy to refiners.

"No deal made," said Republican Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa, a key participant in the talks representing corn growers, in a post on Twitter after the meeting.

Trump had called the meeting amid rising concern in the White House over the current state of the U.S. Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), a law requiring refiners to mix biofuels such as corn-based ethanol into their fuel.

The decade-old policy, intended to help farmers and reduce U.S. petroleum imports, has increasingly divided two of Trump's most important constituencies. A refining company in the key electoral state of Pennsylvania last month blamed the regulation for its bankruptcy.

The meeting included Republican Senators Ted Cruz of Texas and Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania - both from major oil refining states - along with Grassley and Joni Ernst of major corn grower state Iowa.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, and Energy Secretary Rick Perry were also due to attend, according to sources briefed on the meeting.

The White House confirmed the meeting, but did not immediately comment after it concluded. Representatives for the other senators and the agencies also did not immediately comment.

Under the RFS, refiners must cover the costs of blending increasing volumes of biofuels such as ethanol into the nation's gasoline and diesel each year. To prove compliance with the EPA-administered program, they have to acquire credits called RINs, either by earning them through blending, or buying them.

As biofuels volume quotas have increased over the years, so have prices for the credits. That has been good news for companies that blend the fuels, but refiners that do not have their own blending facilities are facing rising costs.

Oil refiner Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) PESC.N, which employs more than 1,000 people in the Philadelphia area, filed for bankruptcy protection last month and blamed the regulation for its demise.

Reuters reported that other factors may also have played a role in the bankruptcy, including the withdrawal of more than \$590 million in dividend-style payments from the company by its investor owners.

Other refiners, such as vocal RFS-opponent Valero Energy Corp (VLO.N) and Marathon Petroleum Corp (MPC.N), are pulling in solid profits despite the biofuels regulation.

America's biggest ethanol producers include Archer Daniels Midland Co (ADM.N) and POET LLC.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060074751/search?keyword=EPA>

Groups say EPA illegally lowered oxygen requirements in La.

2/26/18

U.S. EPA broke the law when it approved a lower requirement for the amount of dissolved oxygen in certain bayous and rivers in Louisiana, according to a lawsuit from environmental groups announced Friday.

EPA's decision will harm wildlife in stream segments that are protected under the Clean Water Act, the groups claim in the lawsuit.

Parts of the Blind River, Bayou Cane, Tchefuncte River, Bayou Lacombe, Bayou Labranche and Bayou Trepagnier were included in the decision.

EPA approved a state agency decision to lower the amount of dissolved oxygen required in the water from 5 milligrams per liter in freshwater segments and 4 milligrams per liter in estuarine river and streams to 2.3 milligrams per liter between March and November.

That will allow businesses to increase the pollutants they are putting in the water, the environmental groups say.

"It is truly troubling to see Louisiana talk about how we need to fix the hypoxic Gulf dead zone, and at the same time allow more than twice as much oxygen-stealing pollution in the rivers and bayous that feed Lake Pontchartrain," said Matt Rota, senior policy director for Gulf Restoration Network, which is one of the groups involved in the lawsuit.

EPA would not comment on pending litigation (Mark Schleifstein, New Orleans Times-Picayune, Feb. 23). — CS

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060074779/search?keyword=EPA>

Supreme Court won't review Bush-era 'transfers' rule

By Amanda Reilly, 2/26/18

The Supreme Court today declined to review a George W. Bush-era rule exempting water transfers from Clean Water Act permits, leaving in place a lower-court decision that reinstated the contentious policy.

Justices today issued an order denying petitions by greens and a New York-led coalition of states appealing the ruling by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

EPA issued the Water Transfers Rule in 2008 excluding interbasin water transfers from permitting requirements. Such systems are common in drinking water, irrigation, flood control and power generation infrastructure throughout the country.

The rule formalized EPA's longstanding position — and one that's been litigated many times over — that water transferred from one body of water to another via a pipe, tunnel or pumping station doesn't require a Clean Water Act discharge permit as long as there wasn't an industrial, municipal or commercial use along the way.

"So you can take water from a dirty navigable water and you can transfer it to a clean, pristine navigable water body. That would not be a discharge covered by the Clean Water Act," Richard Lazarus, a professor at Harvard Law School, said earlier this month at a Supreme Court panel in D.C.

Environmentalists and states sued, and in 2014 a New York federal judge threw out the Bush-era rule.

But in January 2017, a split 2nd Circuit issued a controversial decision finding that while the rule doesn't appear to achieve the protection of water quality, EPA's justification was sound and deserved deference from the court.

The court's analysis centered on the Chevron legal doctrine, under which courts defer to reasonable agency interpretations when Congress has been silent or ambiguous on an issue.

Senior Judge Robert Sack, a Democratic appointee, found that the court was bound by Chevron because Congress never spoke clearly to the question of whether the Clean Water Act requires permits for water transfers.

"Although the rule may or may not be the best or most faithful interpretation of the Act in light of its paramount goal of restoring and protecting the quality of U.S. waters, it is supported by several valid arguments — interpretative, theoretical, and practical," Sack wrote for the 2-1 split court (Greenwire, Jan. 19, 2017).

The 2nd Circuit later declined to rehear the case en banc, or in front of the full court.

In its appeal to the Supreme Court, New York and other states argued that the rule "indisputably" adds pollutants to bodies of water and undermines states' ability to protect their citizens from public health and environmental risks.

They also argued that the 2nd Circuit engaged in a flawed Chevron legal analysis.

"Exempting water transfers from the Clean Water Act's permitting program is fundamentally at

odds with the act's plain language, overarching structures and basic purposes," the states said.

Joining New York were Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Washington and Canada's Manitoba Province.

Riverkeeper, Theodore Gordon Flyfishers and the Waterkeeper Alliance also filed a petition seeking review of the 2nd Circuit decision, arguing in part that it runs counter to the Supreme Court's 2015 opinion in *Michigan v. EPA*, which held the agency was unreasonable when it failed to consider the costs when deciding to regulate mercury emissions from power plants (*Greenwire*, Sept. 21, 2017).

New York City and a dozen other states, including California and Colorado, backed the water transfers rule. Many large cities rely on water transfers in their drinking water systems.

In court filings urging the Supreme Court to decline the case, the Justice Department argued that water transfers rule was a "permissible" interpretation of the Clean Water Act.

EPA "reasonably determined that the CWA's structure, history, and purpose support its reading," government attorneys said.

Some conservative justices have raised concerns about *Chevron*. Justice Neil Gorsuch, for example, penned a concurring opinion that was highly critical of the doctrine while he was a judge on the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

But Supreme Court watchers said the lack of a split among federal appeals courts likely hurt the odds that justices would use the water transfers case as a vehicle to take up the doctrine.

"There's no circuit conflict," Lazarus said. "There were dissents but no circuit conflict."

Today's denial comes after justices last week declined to take up two other disputes over the scope of the government's authority under the Clean Water Act (E&E News PM, Feb. 20).

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060074897/search?keyword=EPA>

EPA rejects challenges to TVA plant permit

By Sean Reilly, 2/27/18

U.S. EPA has rejected a pair of related administrative challenges to the operating permit for one of the Tennessee Valley Authority's coal-fired power plants.

The Sierra Club filed an initial petition in August 2016 questioning the sulfur dioxide emissions limit and other aspects of the state-issued Title V permit for the Gallatin Fossil Plant in north-central Tennessee.

The environmental group followed up with another round of objections in a separate petition last November in a response to proposed changes to the permit for the 976-megawatt facility.

In a recent order denying both petitions, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt dismissed some of the group's claims as moot in light of the permit changes.

He also rejected the challenge to the sulfur dioxide limit on the grounds that it was set by a separate "preconstruction permit" issued by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) and thus fell outside the scope of the Sierra Club's challenge.

"The propriety of TDEC's decisions undertaken in the course of issuing or modifying duly issued preconstruction permits is not properly before the EPA in a petition to object to a source's Title V permit," Pruitt wrote.

EPA is set to publish a notice of his decision in tomorrow's Federal Register, opening a standard two-month window for any lawsuits to be filed with the appropriate federal appellate court.

The Sierra Club had already sued once after EPA failed to meet a 60-day Clean Air Act deadline for acting on the original 2016 petition (Greenwire, May 16, 2017).

In a ruling late last year, Senior U.S. District Judge Rosemary Collyer of the District of Columbia ordered EPA to make a decision by the end of last month, a timetable the agency met.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/375647-agriculture-groups-send-letter-to-trump-supporting-renewable-fuel>

Farm groups urge Trump to keep federal biofuel mandate

By Miranda Green, 2/26/18, 3:02 PM

A number of prominent farming groups are requesting President Trump maintain the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) for vehicles, in hopes that it will continue to prop up ethanol and drive money into the struggling agriculture industry.

In a letter written to the president Monday, the heads of six national farming groups acknowledged that "times are tough" and may get worse for farmers. The group pointed to the RFS, established in 2005 under President George W. Bush, as the "strong engine driving the rural economy."

The RFS is a transportation fuel requirement that orders all fuel sold in the U.S. to maintain a certain level of renewables.

Earlier this week it was reported that Trump would be meeting with various agency heads to discuss possible changes to the biofuel mandate. The president is expected to have lunch on Tuesday at the White House with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, along with Vice President Pence.

"The heart of America is being left behind when it comes to economic growth and opportunity," the groups said in their letter. "By any measure, the RFS has been successful not only for agriculture, but for our nation."

The joint letter to Trump asks him to compare the struggling agriculture industry with the "booming" oil and gas industry when making his decision on RFS. It adds that the recent bankruptcy of refinery Philadelphia Energy Solutions should not be considered proof that the fossil fuel industry cannot be sustained with the RFS in place.

"The failings of one company should not be used as an excuse for undermining a law that serves hundreds of ethanol and biodiesel plants, tens of thousands of renewable fuel plant workers, and millions of farmers who rely upon the strong market demand created by the RFS," the letter reads.

Philadelphia Energy Solutions was the largest East Coast oil-refining complex. The bankruptcy comes just six years after the company was financially rescued by the Carlyle Group, a private equity firm, and petroleum company Sunoco. The refiner blamed costs associated with the RFS for its bankruptcy.

Oil and gas industries have historically pushed back against the RFS, which they believe unfairly props up the renewable market.

“The President and his administration have expressed strong support for the RFS since the early days of President Trump’s campaign,” said National Farmers Union President Roger Johnson in a statement. “We want to be sure he remembers these promises he made to farmers and rural communities as he meets with senior administration officials and lawmakers. Rural communities are under a lot of economic stress, so there is much to gain from a strong RFS, and a lot to lose by weakening it.”

San Francisco Chronicle

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/news/article/At-SF-s-leaderless-EPA-office-cutbacks-and-12705164.php>

Cutbacks, policy shifts pummel morale at EPA office in SF

By Peter Fimrite, 2/23/18, 5:40 PM

Lynda Deschambault knew her career at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had taken a hard turn in July when, she said, her supervisor told her during a performance review to “be as invisible as possible.” The next month, she took early retirement.

The request, she said, was jarring for a woman who had spent two decades enforcing pollution laws and the cleanup of toxic lands for the EPA’s Pacific Southwest region, based in San Francisco. Managing Superfund sites is not a position that lends itself to blending in.

“I’ve been through other administrations before, and we were always told to tighten our

bootstraps and get to work. This was saying, ‘Well, don’t do your job,’” said Deschambault, who was the remediation manager at Leviathan Mine, an abandoned sulfur pit in Alpine County. “It was very surreal. I had never seen this before.”

More than a year into the Trump presidency, cuts to the EPA’s budget and the easing of regulations under Administrator Scott Pruitt have demoralized many workers in San Francisco-based Region 9, according to three current employees, a manager and a scientist who left in the past year, and five other former employees.

In interviews with The Chronicle, the workers described a situation in which managers, enforcement officers and scientists who take pride in their mission are being pushed out or shunted to the side. They said the tension is probably one reason Region 9 is the only one of the agency’s 10 offices still without a permanent leader.

“I’ve been here 31 years, and this is definitely the worst I’ve seen it in the EPA in terms of job security, staffing and just being able to do the work that the American people expect to protect the environment,” said Mark Sims, an engineer in the air enforcement division in Region 9 who spoke as a representative of the local chapter of the Engineers and Scientists of California union.

The White House said this month it is seeking to cut more than \$2.5 billion out of the agency’s budget. The proposal, for fiscal 2019, would shrink EPA spending by more than 23 percent. That would come on top of reductions carried out in 2017, when hundreds of employees, or roughly 5 percent, took buyouts and early retirement.

Pruitt, who declined to be interviewed, is engaged in a revamping of the EPA anchored in his belief that the agency has overstepped its congressional mandate, including when it began regulating heat-trapping greenhouse gases under President Barack Obama and hindered oil, gas and coal production in favor of renewable energy.

Pruitt, who as Oklahoma attorney general sued the agency 14 times, has denounced the “picking of winners and losers” and believes in a “lean” EPA using a collaborative regulatory system. A memo sent to regional administrators Jan. 2 said the priority is “a level playing field for regulated entities.” It urged EPA regulators to defer to the states on enforcement whenever possible.

“What’s happened over the last 10 years or so is that the agency evolved and morphed into something that was almost like a superagency,” Pruitt told the New York Times in a recent podcast. “I think the agency took the perspective ... that though we have been blessed with natural resources that help us literally feed the world and power the world, that we should not develop those resources.”

Central to Pruitt’s agenda — and particularly alarming to the current and former employees who spoke to The Chronicle — is his questioning of climate science. He acknowledged that the planet is warming in a recent television interview, but said it wasn’t “necessarily a bad thing,” despite evidence that warming could drive extreme weather events and coastal inundation from sea level rise. Pruitt has removed much of the information that the EPA had about climate change from the agency’s website.

The request for Deschambault to lie low came on top of a series of regulatory rollbacks and cost-cutting moves. In October, Pruitt announced his intention to repeal the Clean Power Plan, Obama’s 2015 bid to curb power plants’ release of greenhouse gases. He said the program had “weaponized” the agency.

Even without the budget cuts at the EPA, enforcement has suffered, critics say. A report released this month by the nonprofit Environmental Integrity Project, which pushes for strong enforcement of environmental laws, said that in the first 12 months of the Trump administration, the agency brought an average of 44 percent fewer civil cases than the previous three administrations did in the same time frame. The report said civil penalties paid by polluters declined 49 percent during the same period.

Deschambault and others said a malaise has gripped the EPA office at 75 Hawthorne St. in San Francisco, as managers are forced to tighten purse strings and limit inspections.

“Many inspectors have been discouraged from conducting inspections, and the attorneys who focus on enforcement have been moving away from it,” said Taly Jolish, an EPA lawyer speaking in her capacity as the president of the local American Federation of Government Employees union. “It’s depressing and discouraging ... we came to EPA to enforce the environmental laws of the United States, which have been the model for the world.”

The 702 employees in Region 9 enforce federal regulations in California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, the Pacific islands and 148 tribal nations. The office has ordered California to re-examine rules that allowed oil companies to inject wastewater into aquifers, fined companies that polluted San Francisco Bay, forced the cleanup of rivers and creeks, and taken legal action against the Bureau of Indian Affairs for not providing adequate drinking water to schools on Indian land.

Environmental advocates say Pruitt's actions have decreased critical oversight of polluting industries.

"We don't have a fully functioning agency and that's intentional," said Jared Blumenfeld, who ran the San Francisco office before stepping down as regional administrator in May 2016. He said Pruitt is "delivering on his promise: Don't do enforcement so polluters can be left to pollute."

Pruitt has said oversight remains strong, but now strictly follows federal law.

The San Francisco office employs about 250 fewer people than it did in 2010, Blumenfeld said. Records show about 700 employees nationwide have left the EPA since Trump was elected. Staffing is now roughly equivalent to the level in 1988, when 14,442 people worked for the agency. That's about 3,000 less than were employed at the EPA a year into the administrations of Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said 400 workers took buyouts, including 11 in Region 9, a small percentage of those who were eligible. He disputed that the San Francisco office is beset by concern over the agency's direction, saying, "Morale is great at EPA."

Blumenfeld said 800 to 900 employees are needed to attend to all of the work in Region 9. Sims said that in addition to those who took buyouts, as many as 40 other San Francisco employees quit or retired last year. Pruitt's plan, he said, is to cut 10 percent a year for the next three years in Region 9, eliminating 47 jobs in the coming fiscal year.

Those numbers are “not accurate,” Wilcox said without elaborating.

Environmental groups and Democratic politicians are afraid staffing nationwide will be decreased so much that it matches the early 1980s, when then-EPA administrator Anne Gorsuch cut the budget, feuded with employees and reduced cases against polluters. She resigned in 1983 after a scandal over the mismanagement of the Superfund program. There were fewer than 11,000 employees in the agency that year, according to EPA documents.

Pruitt’s critics fear he will end dozens of programs nationwide and virtually eliminate work related to climate change. They say deferring to states with varying environmental priorities will make it more difficult for the EPA to hold polluters accountable.

The critics point to a recent settlement with Syngenta Seeds, which was accused of exposing workers in Hawaii to an insecticide. The EPA initially sought \$4.8 million after 10 workers at a farm on Kauai were hospitalized, but settled this month for \$150,000 while mandating a training program for growers.

“To reduce it by this amount is quite unusual,” said Judith Enck, a former EPA administrator in New York.

Pruitt has stated he wants to focus on Superfund cleanup and recently released a list of 21 sites targeted for immediate attention. The list included two of the 111 sites in Region 9. California has 98 Superfund sites, second in the nation to New Jersey.

One site on the list was ARCO’s abandoned Anaconda Copper Mine southeast of Reno. But instead of going forward with a remediation plan this month, Pruitt agreed, over the objections of nearby American Indian tribes and environmentalists, to delay a Superfund priority listing for at least four years.

“The first thing he did where an oil company is the polluter was say, ‘Oh, we won’t make it a Superfund site,’” said Kathy Setian, an environmental engineer who worked for 20 years as a Superfund project manager and left the agency in 2012. “It’s devastating. I feel like it is my life’s work that is being dismantled.”

Some project managers say regulations are being relaxed at many toxic sites, including Leviathan Mine, a 250-acre property in the Sierra abandoned in the early 1960s after sulfuric acid drained out and metals were detected in a creek and on Washoe Indian land. The state of California bought the site in 1983, and the Washoe asked the EPA to intervene 15 years later.

Oversight and the interpretation of data collected at the mine were curtailed last June as part of the lean management adopted by Pruitt. Deschambault said she was told to cut down on meetings and stop putting pressure on ARCO, which as a former site owner was handling cleanup, to provide the EPA with sampling results.

When Deschambault pushed back, she said she was told a second site manager would be brought in to streamline the process. She said her supervisor had told her to be “invisible” out of helpless frustration and concern for her, not out of animosity. The agency did not allow the supervisor to respond to inquiries, but Deschambault said she was told her supervisor denied the charge after she included it in her resignation letter.

“We don’t have any information for you at this time,” Michele Huitric, a Region 9 spokeswoman, wrote in an email when asked about Deschambault’s allegations.

“We feel like the administrator is promoting the oil and gas industries and that he’s focused on limiting the work that we feel is important,” Jolish said. “He sees industry as our customer.”

Wilcox said that “Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”

Blumenfeld’s onetime deputy, Alexis Strauss, has been acting administrator for Region 9 for nearly two years. (She could not be reached for comment.) So far, none of Pruitt’s preferred

candidates have agreed to take over an office in a left-leaning region populated by employees considered to be largely hostile to the administration's views.

Ryan Flynn, an oil and gas lobbyist in New Mexico, recently became the second oil industry executive to turn down the job, the Los Angeles Times reported, citing EPA sources. Flynn, who was twice awarded the "Toxic Turkey" prize by the New Mexico Environmental Law Center, was not a popular choice among the rank and file, current and former Region 9 workers said.

Flynn, the executive director of the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association, told The Chronicle he "never aspired" to be the San Francisco office administrator.

"I admire EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and strongly believe in EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment, however, my family is happily rooted in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and I am very satisfied with my current role," he said in an email.

Managers and former employees said EPA staffers fear that resisting changes, or criticizing the leadership, will lead to being targeted by the administration.

The EPA gave a no-bid, \$120,000 contract to a Republican-linked opposition-research firm, Definers Public Affairs, and the the New York Times reported that one of its executives spent last year filing Freedom of Information Act requests while scouring the agency for "resistance" figures.

"People are so afraid of retribution," Setian said. "They are trying to intimidate people."

Wilcox, the EPA spokesman, said the firm was hired only to collect and categorize media reports for the agency. He denied the agency had sought to intimidate employees, but he acknowledged internal communications were subject to review.

"Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information

Act,” he said, “and in terms of the FOIAs, nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”

Deschambault said it is clear to her that the agency’s watchdog role is broken.

“The people we used to regulate are now in charge,” she said.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060074885/search?keyword=EPA>

Md. lawmakers urge boycott of Pa. over pollution

By Ariel Wittenberg, 2/27/18

Fed up with Pennsylvania pollution fouling the Chesapeake Bay and worried that U.S. EPA won't act decisively, a pair of Maryland state delegates are proposing an unusual solution: a boycott of the Keystone State.

"At some point in time, you've got to stop getting punched in the face and stand up to a bully, regardless of the consequences," Del. Benjamin Kramer (D) told the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee on Friday.

Kramer and his H.B. 1055 co-sponsor Del. David Fraser-Hidalgo (D) say their bill is the only way to get Pennsylvania to start paying attention and stop polluting the bay.

The legislation would bar Maryland from contracting with Pennsylvania companies or paying for Maryland employees' travel expenses to the state.

Kramer says he hopes the bill will spur a Maryland-wide tourism boycott of Pennsylvania, regardless of its success in the Legislature.

He has commissioned car window stickers to make his point. They depict a crab that's colored like the Maryland state flag urinating on the state of Pennsylvania. "Hey PA!" the sticker reads, "Quit Polluting My Bay!"

"If our residents knew what was happening, I think they would welcome the idea of a tourism boycott," Kramer told the committee Friday.

At issue are nutrient pollution and sediment flowing off farm fields into the Susquehanna River and over the Conowingo Dam into the Chesapeake Bay.

Pennsylvania has long been the laggard of the Chesapeake Bay cleanup agreement among six states and Washington, D.C. U.S. EPA data from 2016 show that nitrogen entering the bay from Pennsylvania was 113 million pounds per year. By comparison, Maryland nitrogen was less than half that, at 50 million pounds per year.

Pennsylvania's failure to meet milestone implementation targets for reducing pollution has triggered so-called backstop actions for enhanced EPA oversight of the state's agriculture and urban runoff sectors.

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection spokeswoman Deborah Klenotic declined to comment on the bill, saying only that the department "is committed to working with Maryland and other state partners to reduce contributions to the Chesapeake Bay from Pennsylvania's part of the Bay watershed."

But Fraser-Hidalgo said at last week's hearing that his bill comes from a place of desperation.

"It was born out of years of work this committee has done to try and address the pollution, and particularly a lot of agriculture pollution that's coming into the bay over the Conowingo Dam," he said.

He said the committee has been sending letters to officials both in Pennsylvania and at EPA since 2015 to push Pennsylvania to do more, without success.

He noted that EPA last year threatened to withhold \$3 million in grants to Pennsylvania but "released them anyway."

"If we are going to rely on EPA to help protect Marylanders and the Chesapeake Bay, it's not going to happen. It's degrading," he said.

But Chris Brooks, director of water resources at Pennsylvania-based transportation company McCormick Taylor Inc., says the bill could cause harm. His company has offices in Maryland and contracts with that state's Department of Transportation.

If the bill passes, he told the committee, "That would likely result in the layoffs of 90 Maryland employees, including myself."

His company's contracts with the state include stormwater runoff management for highways and stream restoration efforts — all of which could prevent pollution from entering the bay.

"Our employees care deeply about the work we do to help the Chesapeake," he said, "It would be a cruel irony to see their jobs cut simply because our accountants reside in Pennsylvania."

Fraser-Hidalgo responded that the bill "isn't something we presented lightly." He added, "This isn't something we want to do or are excited to do; this is just us being put in a box."

But Chairman Kumar Barve (D) said he was concerned that the legislation could "trigger retaliation" from Pennsylvania against Maryland businesses.

The bill's sponsors said that was "just speculation," and there's no indication retaliation would occur.

"I think that the moral high ground is unquestionably on our side, and it would be very difficult for the Pennsylvania Legislature to be able to give a reason and a purpose when this is all about their failures and consistent lack of interest in protecting Maryland's economy and Maryland's environment," Kramer said. "And I would say to you, Mr. Chairman, that there's only one way to find out, at the end of the day."

Maryland Del. Anne Healey (D), who is originally from Pennsylvania, said she agrees with the purpose of the bill and is "really enraged about the way Pennsylvania has ignored their responsibility." But she said she worries that the measure could be unconstitutional because it would obstruct interstate commerce.

Kramer noted, however, that while his original bill called out Pennsylvania by name, the current draft does not mention it, instead referring to a "certain state" against which EPA has taken two backstop actions.

"In theory, if another state was to hit two backstop action levels, including ours, this could apply to us," he said.

Del. Herbert McMillan, the only Republican to speak at the hearing, could only joke about the effort.

"I'm fired up, I am enthused," he said. "I just want to know if you'll accept a friendly amendment — to build a wall and make them pay for it!"

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Tue 10/3/2017 10:46:44 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Koch Industries: 59 dead, 527 injured in LAS VEGAS attack ... WHAT WASHINGTON NEEDS TO KNOW -- How will Republicans handle gun legislation, and what happens to high-capacity magazines -- KIMMEL fights through tears

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Koch Industries

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Tuesday morning. 59 dead. 527 injured. 42 guns in the shooter's hotel room and house.

WAPO LEADALL -- "At least 59 killed in Las Vegas shooting rampage, more than 500 others injured," by Lynh Bui in Las Vegas, Matt Zapotosky, Devlin Barrett and Mark Berman in Washington: "Police said he stayed in a large hotel suite for several days and aroused no suspicion, bringing with him an arsenal of 23 guns -- their calibers ranging from .223 to .308, some with scopes -- authorities said. One of the weapons he apparently used in the attack was an AK-47 type rifle, with a stand used to steady it for firing, people familiar with the case said. He fired, without warning, from an elevated position on an open-air venue, leaving his victims few options to avoid harm. ...

"Among the questions [investigators] have: How a former accountant with a penchant for high-stakes gambling obtained a weapon that sounded to those on the ground like it could fire as an automatic, and how he was able to bring it and many other weapons into a Vegas hotel suite undetected. ... Lombardo said hotel staff had been in and out of the two-room suite, which Paddock had stayed in since Sept. 28, and spotted nothing 'nefarious,' though he had more than 10 suitcases." <http://wapo.st/2xUYZkS>

-- CONTRIBUTING TO THE POST'S STORY: Tim Craig, Felicia Mello and Heather Long in Las Vegas; Barbara Liston in Orlando; Justin Glawe in Mesquite, Tex.; and Derek Hawkins, Travis M. Andrews, Brian Murphy, Wesley Lowery and Julie Tate in Washington.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ...

-- AP ... HOW HE GOT OFF SO MANY SHOTS: "The gunman who unleashed hundreds of rounds of gunfire on a crowd of concertgoers in Las Vegas had two 'bump-stocks' that could have converted semi-automatic firearms into fully automatic ones, officials said. ... California Sen. Dianne Feinstein has long railed against them. Several years ago, she told The Associated Press she was concerned about the emergence of new technologies that could retrofit firearms to make them fully automatic. 'This replacement shoulder stock turns a semi-automatic rifle into a weapon that can fire at a rate of 400 to 800 rounds per minute,' she said." <http://bit.ly/2xXwFz4>

-- NYT ... THE PREPARATION, by C.J. Chivers, Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Adam Goldman: "[M]r. Paddock established firing positions by smashing a pair of windows in his hotel room. He was armed with at least 23 firearms, the authorities said, including rifles designed to be fired at such distances. He was also perched from a vantage point that increased the likelihood that even errant shots were more likely to strike someone than had he fired them from ground level. Among his weapons, a law enforcement official said, were AR-15-style rifles, a civilian variant of a standard service rifle used by the American military for more than a half-century.

"The possibility that Mr. Paddock used tripods, which two law enforcement officials said were in the room, indicates that he understood how to overcome some of the difficulties of his plan. Special mounts designed to fit the underside of a rifle and sit atop camera tripods allow the gunman to fire more accurately while standing. Military snipers use tripods in urban spaces, often setting themselves back from a window so neither they nor their weapons can be seen from the streets below." <http://nyti.ms/2yImYuX>

-- WAPO ... THE PEOPLE WHO DIED: -- "The lives lost in Las Vegas": "Dozens of people were killed and hundreds were injured Sunday when a gunman opened fire at a country music festival in Las Vegas. Here are stories of those who died." <http://wapo.st/2xWYilj>

-- THE SHOOTER ... NYT 's Jose DelReal and Jonah Engel Bromwich: "He was a high-stakes gambler recognized in the casinos of Nevada. He dabbled in real estate investments in Texas. His last known full-time employment was 30 years ago. He was twice divorced. He had a pilot's license and had owned two single-engine planes. ... Mr. Paddock bought three guns -- a handgun and two rifles -- at a shop in Mesquite, Guns & Guitars, within the last year, said Christopher Sullivan, the general manager. All the purchases were legal and cleared routine federal screening, Mr. Sullivan said. 'The man does not have a criminal history,' Mr. Sullivan said." <http://nyti.ms/2yTNBEC>

-- THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL (The Memphis newspaper) ... THE COMPANION: **"Who is Stephen Paddock's roommate, Marilou Danley?"** <http://memne.ws/2yEUDfw>

CHOOSE YOUR NEWS: Las Vegas Review-Journal: **"In the face of tragedy, the Strip falls silent"** <http://bit.ly/2g773G7> ... Las Vegas Sun: **"A day after horrific event, a semblance of normalcy along Strip"** <http://bit.ly/2yETtR1>

NYT EDITORIAL: "477 Days. 521 Mass Shootings. Zero Action From Congress."

<http://nyti.ms/2xOeax4> ... **WSJ EDITORIAL: "'An Act of Pure Evil': Amid the Las Vegas horror, don't forget Steve Scalise's recovery."** <http://on.wsj.com/2g7IClo>

TWO THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR ...

-- HOW DO REPUBLICANS HANDLE GUN BILLS? Republicans in the House were readying to pass the SHARE Act, a bill which would, among other things, ease regulations on gun silencers and strips the ATF's ability to classify some ammunition as "armor piercing." This bill is a priority of the NRA. It doesn't stand a chance of becoming law, but the optics of pursuing it would be politically tricky, to say the least. Rep. Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.) -- the bill's sponsor -- told us off the House floor Monday night that he didn't think Las Vegas had changed anything in relation to his bill, and he expected a vote in the coming weeks. A Republican leadership aide said there were some unspecified issues with the legislation. ***John Bresnahan, Heather Caygle and Burgess Everett on the state of play*** <http://politi.co/2yEq0qv>

-- COULD THIS BE THE END OF HIGH-CAPACITY MAGAZINES? A big gun-control bill isn't going to happen. But there seems to be a lingering fear in some pockets of the right that the mass shooting will force Congress to limit the ability to purchase high-capacity magazines, which allow shooters to spray bullets without reloading. Any tightening of gun restrictions in an all-Republican Washington is **VERY HARD TO IMAGINE**, and top aides and lawmakers we spoke to yesterday were skeptical. But this is one area gun-rights advocates are watching closely. One veteran operative for the gun lobby said the latest shooting could bring the debate "roaring back." **LINGERING QUESTION:** Where does Trump -- who has branded himself as close to the NRA -- land on this issue?

THE FIRST LIVE LEADERSHIP REACTION -- SPEAKER PAUL RYAN and House Republican leaders at 10 a.m.

JIMMY KIMMEL's very emotional, tearful monologue from last night.
<http://bit.ly/2yT6EyR>

ANNIE KARNI: "Las Vegas shooting presents new kind of leadership test for Trump": "President Donald Trump's reaction to the country's deadliest mass shooting -- a somber statement from the Diplomatic Room, a moment of silence on the South Lawn, and a dormant-for-a-day Twitter feed -- didn't make a tragic situation worse. The president's words and actions, Democrats and Republicans said, were in line with what any other National Rifle Association-backed president would do. Trump's call for unity in the face of 'an act of pure evil' was accompanied by a day declared by his team to be a no-go zone for political or policy discussions about the nation's gun laws.

"For the first nine months of his presidency, most of the crises Trump has faced have been of his own making. But the shooting, which killed at least 59 and injured

more than 500 Las Vegas concert-goers Sunday night, presents a new kind of leadership test. In the coming days, as the window of a condolences-only response to a domestic tragedy closes, Trump will be forced to navigate a thorny political situation as he reacts to the first mass shooting to unfold on his watch.

"Mass shootings in America have become moments of national reckoning on immigration, terrorism and bullying. In this case, where the shooter had no clear motive, the discussion quickly turned to the one subject Trump and his advisers steered clear of in their first 24-hours of response: gun safety measures. Already, some moderate Republicans have expressed hope that the shooting will push him to come out against a bill pending in the House that would loosen restrictions on purchasing silencers."
<http://politi.co/2fGkvjK>

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THE NRA PLAYBOOK -- "NRA goes dark after Vegas massacre," by Josh Meyer: "Democrats lashed out at the National Rifle Association after the worst mass shooting in American history Monday, but instead of fighting back the gun rights group retreated to a familiar posture: silence. The NRA's website, Twitter feed and Facebook page—all of which are typically updated frequently throughout the day—went dark on Monday, posting no new content, and the group did not respond to several calls and emails seeking comment.

"But that doesn't mean the powerful Washington lobbying organization isn't extremely busy behind the scenes. After a mass casualty shooting like the one that killed 58 in Las Vegas Sunday night, the NRA invariably turns to a playbook it has perfected over several decades, critics and supporters alike told POLITICO. The approach calls for aggressive fact-finding and long strategy sessions before any public statements. The Fairfax, Va.-based organization has waited weeks before responding to past deadly incidents that NRA critics call the indirect result of its resistance to tighter gun control."
<http://politi.co/2xdsxXy>

SCOOP - "Trump administration weighing executive order on welfare," by Andrew Restuccia: "Trump administration officials are mulling an executive order that would instruct federal agencies to review low-income assistance programs, part of a coming effort to make sweeping changes to the country's welfare system. The White House began circulating a draft order to federal agencies for comment last week, according to two administration officials ... One of the officials said the draft order calls on agencies to review existing regulations and propose new rules that conform to a set of broad welfare principles, including tighter work requirements that encourage recipients to shift back into the labor force." <http://politi.co/2khbiDk>

RETIREMENT WATCH -- "Collins agonizes over decision to ditch the Senate," by Burgess Everett: "Sen. Heidi Heitkamp was watching TV recently when she saw a report that Susan Collins was considering a run for Maine governor and soliciting advice on the decision. The North Dakota Democrat quickly shot a text message to her Republican colleague: 'Don't do it.'

"A move by Collins to seek the governorship would rock the Senate and the broader political landscape. In a chamber controlled by just 52 Republicans, Collins and a handful of other centrist senators can decide the fate of President Donald Trump's agenda. And a run by Collins for governor could eventually cost the GOP one of its last congressional footholds in New England. ...

"In an interview, Collins said the buzz about her prolonged indecision is 'accurate.' She initially planned to make up her mind by the end of September, but pushed back her deadline to mid-October as she wrestled with the GOP's recent Obamacare repeal effort. 'Given the contentious environment in Washington right now, my voice and vote matter a great deal,' Collins said. 'On the other hand, if I were fortunate enough to be elected governor, I could work more directly on job creation.'" <http://politi.co/2xcvOq7>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Republicans might block Trump from killing Iran nuke deal," by Seung Min Kim and Elana Schor: "President Donald Trump might soon toss the Iran nuclear deal back to Congress to decide its fate -- but it's no sure thing that lawmakers would kill it for good. Critics of the Obama-era agreement, led by the president himself, appear to be on a mission to tank the accord. Naysayers in Congress are vowing to take advantage of a fast-track mechanism that would allow lawmakers to reinstate sanctions against Tehran with a simple majority vote. ...

"Democratic senators, even those who opposed the nuclear agreement two years ago, want the deal to remain in place. As it stands now, enough Republicans are undecided that GOP leaders would struggle to corral the votes needed to reimpose sanctions. The choice could land on Capitol Hill later this month, if Trump declines to certify by an Oct. 15 deadline that Iran is complying with the nuclear deal." <http://politi.co/2kigvuB>

MORE EMAIL DRAMA -- "Hundreds of White House emails sent to third Kushner family account," by Josh Dawsey and Andrea Peterson: "White House officials have begun examining emails associated with a third and previously unreported email account on Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump's private domain, according to three people familiar with the matter. Hundreds of emails have been sent since January from White House addresses to accounts on the Kushner family domain, these people said. Many of those emails went not to Kushner's or Ivanka Trump's personal addresses but to an account they both had access to and shared with their personal household staff for family scheduling.

"The emails - which include nonpublic travel documents, internal schedules and some official White House materials -were in many cases sent from Ivanka Trump, her

assistant Bridges Lamar and others who work with the couple in the White House. The emails to the third account were largely sent from White House accounts but occasionally came from other private accounts, one of these people said."

<http://politi.co/2xNfaBL>

TRUMP'S TUESDAY -- Trump and the First Lady will leave this morning for San Juan, Puerto Rico. They will be briefed on Hurricane Maria relief efforts and meet with residents impacted by the hurricane. U.S. Virgin Islands Gov. Kenneth Mapp and Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló will meet with the Trumps. They will then greet the Navy and Marine Corps before returning back to D.C.

PLAYBOOK METRO SECTION -- "Laurene Powell Jobs is buying a big stake in Wizards, Capitals sports empire," by WaPo's Thomas Heath: "Powell Jobs's investment, estimated to be hundreds of millions of dollars, will give her the second-largest stake - about 20 percent - in Monumental, the 19-member, Ted Leonsis-led holding company that is one of Washington's highest-profile enterprises, the people said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the deal has not been approved by the NBA and NHL ...

"The investment by Powell Jobs increases her presence in the Washington community after her business and philanthropic arm, Emerson Collective, bought a majority interest in The Atlantic magazine from its owner David Bradley in July."

<http://wapo.st/2hK30mE>

THE JUICE ...

-- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: SPEAKER PAUL RYAN TO SPEAK AT RTCA DINNER:

The Wisconsin Republican is the headliner at the 73rd annual Radio and Television Congressional Correspondents Association dinner Oct. 25 at the National Building Museum. Roy Wood Jr. from the "Daily Show" is the headline entertainer, and iHeart Media's Bobby Bones is the guest emcee. John Parkinson of ABC News is the dinner's chairman.

-- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: AAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORRY BLISS continued his drumbeat on tax reform Monday, hosting more than 40 people, including aides from the White House, Treasury, Senate and House GOP leadership, and House Ways and Means Committee, along with more than two dozen conservative, business and tax groups. Topics discussed included: Hill engagement and the timeline for moving forward.

SPOTTED: White House's Marc Short, Treasury's Shannon McGahn, Antonia Ferrier and Brendan Dunn of Mitch McConnell's office, Brendan Buck, George Callas, Derrick Dockery, Josh Althouse and Jake Kastan from the Speaker's operation and Rick Limardo from Ways and Means. Outside groups represented included: Americans for Tax Reform, Americans for Prosperity, AR Squared, National Taxpayers Union, Americans for Limited Government, American Petroleum Institute, Freedom Partners

and the BRT, among others.

-- **PLAYBOOK SCOOP:** Amy McGrath, the Democrat running against Rep. Andy Barr (R-Ky.), raised \$768,000 in the two months last quarter she was in the race. She has \$550,000 on hand.

REMEMBERING TOM PETTY -- "Tom Petty, Heartbreakers frontman who sang 'Breakdown,' 'Free Fallin'" and other hits, dies at 66," by L.A. Times' Randy Lewis:
<http://lat.ms/2wtTJBJ>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.) shakes her fist at the United States Capitol as she and her husband Mark Kelly speak on Capitol Hill on Oct. 2 about the mass shooting in Las Vegas. | Susan Walsh/AP Photo

K ST. FILES -- "Congressman Duped Into Holding Sham Hearing for Ukrainian TV," by The Daily Beast's Betsy Woodruff and Andrew Desiderio: "A former U.S. lawmaker appears to have duped a freshman congressman's office into organizing a sham 'hearing' that aired on Ukrainian television on behalf of a shadowy lobbying client implicated in the Panama Papers leak, The Daily Beast has learned. Former Rep. Connie Mack (R-FL) reached out to the office of Rep. Ron Estes (R-KS) -- a freshman lawmaker who won the special election to replace CIA Director Mike Pompeo -- to reserve a room in the basement of the Capitol for an event on the Ukrainian banking sector.

"As The Weekly Standard documents, the fake 'hearing' was broadcast in full on Ukraine's NewsOne and described to viewers as the 'U.S. Congressional Committee on Financial Issues.' But not a single member of Congress attended. ... Panelists at the event included Sergiy Taruta, a former politician in Ukraine, Oleksandr Zavadetskyi, a former NBU employee, and James Woolsey, the former CIA director under President Bill Clinton who also served as an adviser to President Trump's campaign. ... An Estes spokesman added that the office policy for booking rooms has been updated to ensure that this doesn't happen again. ...

"Mack is a registered lobbyist on behalf of a firm called Interconnection Commerce, which according to Mack's lobbying disclosure is headquartered in the British Virgin Islands and is focused on 'shining a light on corruption in Ukraine.' ... During the event, Mack implied he is still a member of Congress." <http://thebea.st/2xb9WjT> ... **The Weekly Standard piece** <http://twsi.io/2xcWjLO>

TRUMP'S CABINET -- "Federal watchdog opens probe into travel by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke," by WaPo's Lisa Rein: "The inspector general for the Interior

Department has opened an investigation into Secretary Ryan Zinke's travel during seven months in office, from his use of taxpayer-funded charter and military planes to his mixing of official trips with political appearances. Nancy K. DiPaolo, a spokesperson for Deputy Inspector General Mary Kendall, described a broad investigation into Zinke's 'travel in general,' including 'modes of travel, costs and schedules.' 'It's not just one trip,' she said. 'It's seven months of travel.'

"She said the probe was prompted by numerous complaints from employees and the public and recent newspaper articles. Reps. Raúl M. Grijalva (Ariz.) and A. Donald McEachin (Va.), the top Democrats, respectively, on the House Committee on Natural Resources and the panel's subcommittee on oversight and investigations, also requested an investigation." <http://wapo.st/2fGCu9K>

-- **"E.P.A. Chief's Calendar: A Stream of Industry Meetings and Trips Home,"** by NYT's Eric Lipton and Lisa Friedman: "For lunch on April 26, Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, dined with top executives from Southern Company, one of the nation's largest coal-burning electric utilities, at Equinox, a white-tablecloth favorite of Washington power brokers. That evening, it was on to BLT Prime, a steakhouse inside the Trump International Hotel in Washington, for a meal with the board of directors of Alliance Resource Partners, a coal-mining giant whose chief executive donated nearly \$2 million to help elect President Trump. Before those two agenda items, Mr. Pruitt met privately with top executives and lobbyists from General Motors to talk about their request to block an Obama administration move to curb emissions that contribute to climate change.

"It was just a typical day for Mr. Pruitt, the former Oklahoma attorney general. Since taking office in February, Mr. Trump's E.P.A. chief has held back-to-back meetings, briefing sessions and speaking engagements almost daily with top corporate executives and lobbyists from all the major economic sectors that he regulates - and almost no meetings with environmental groups or consumer or public health advocates, according to a 320-page accounting of his daily schedule from February through May, the most detailed look yet at what Mr. Pruitt has been up to since he took over the agency." <http://nyti.ms/2kgBwWJ>

-- **"DeVos' security detail could cost up to \$6.54M over the next year,"** by Caitlin Emma: "That projected cost is seen as a 'high water mark' that the agency doesn't plan to exceed, said spokeswoman Liz Hill. An agreement governing DeVos' protective detail - which is provided around the clock by the U.S. Marshals Service - was just renewed for fiscal 2018, which began on Saturday. ... It's extremely unusual for the Education secretary to be protected by marshals - the past four Education secretaries have been protected by the Education Department's own small security force." <http://politi.co/2ylVVjt>

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million bushels of their corn to our facilities where we extract the necessary ingredients for both ethanol and high-quality biodiesel. We convert the remaining portions of the kernels into distillers grains, a livestock feed that helps nourish hogs, cattle and poultry. Farmers work hard to grow their crops, and we strive to help create the most value from their harvest. We also focus on reducing waste and leaving more natural resources available for future needs. It's part of Koch's commitment to operate responsibly in the communities across America that are home to our more than 70,000 U.S. employees. Learn more about our renewable fuels at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

MUELLER WATCH -- "Mueller Tasks Adviser With Getting Ahead of Pre-Emptive Pardons," by Bloomberg's Greg Farrell: "U.S. Special Counsel Robert Mueller has a distinctly modern problem. The president, judging by his tweets, could try to pardon people in his circle even before prosecutors charge anyone with a crime. Mueller's all-star team of prosecutors, with expertise in money laundering and foreign bribery, has an answer to that. He's Michael Dreeben, a bookish career government lawyer with more than 100 Supreme Court appearances under his belt.

"Acting as Mueller's top legal counsel, Dreeben has been researching past pardons and determining what, if any, limits exist, according to a person familiar with the matter. Dreeben's broader brief is to make sure the special counsel's prosecutorial moves are legally airtight. That could include anything from strategizing on novel interpretations of criminal law to making sure the recent search warrant on ex-campaign adviser Paul Manafort's home would stand up to an appeal." <https://bloom.bg/2ymmyop>

-- **"White House legal defense fund close to launching,"** by Darren Samuelsohn: "Some White House aides who face legal bills as a result of the congressional and special counsel investigations into Russian meddling in the 2016 election could get financial support as soon as this week, a senior White House aide said on Monday. The finishing touches are being put on a legal defense fund to help mid-level staffers pay for their attorneys, said Ty Cobb, a lawyer in President Donald Trump's White House." <http://politi.co/2xOw8zl>

RUSSIA WATCH -- "Trump's company had more contact with Russia during campaign, according to documents turned over to investigators," by WaPo's Tom Hamburger, Ros Helderman and Adam Entous: "Associates of President Trump and his company have turned over documents to federal investigators that reveal two previously unreported contacts from Russia during the 2016 campaign, according to people familiar with the matter. In one case, Trump's personal attorney and a business associate exchanged emails weeks before the Republican National Convention about the lawyer possibly traveling to an economic conference in Russia that would be attended by top Russian financial and government leaders, including President Vladimir Putin ... In the other case, the same Trump attorney, Michael Cohen, received a proposal in late 2015 for a Moscow residential project from a company founded by a billionaire who once served in the upper house of the Russian parliament." <http://wapo.st/2xcTaff>

-- **"Russians took a page from corporate America by using Facebook tool to ID and influence voters,"** by WaPo's Elizabeth Dwoskin, Craig Timberg and Adam Entous: "Russian operatives set up an array of misleading Web sites and social media pages to identify American voters susceptible to propaganda, then used a powerful Facebook tool to repeatedly send them messages designed to influence their political behavior, say people familiar with the investigation into foreign meddling in the U.S. election. The tactic resembles what American businesses and political campaigns have been doing in recent years to deliver messages to potentially interested people online."

"The Russians exploited this system by creating English-language sites and Facebook pages that closely mimicked those created by U.S. political activists. The Web sites and Facebook pages displayed ads or other messages focused on such hot-button issues as illegal immigration, African American political activism and the rising prominence of Muslims in the United States. The Russian operatives then used a Facebook 'retargeting' tool, called Custom Audiences, to send specific ads and messages to voters who had visited those sites." <http://wapo.st/2xPDSz3>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "U.S. to expel two-thirds of Cuban diplomats amid sonic attack probe," by McClatchy's Franco Ordoñez: "The Trump administration will kick nearly two-thirds of Cuba's embassy personnel out of the United States after months of mysterious attacks targeting American diplomats drove the White House to pull its own staff from Havana, according to multiple sources familiar with the plan. According to three of the U.S. sources briefed on the plan, the State Department will announce the expulsion of Cuban diplomatic personnel as soon as Tuesday. A fourth described the expulsion as 'reciprocity' for the American withdrawal from Havana." <http://bit.ly/2xUxFU1>

VALLEY TALK - "Facebook is hiring another 1,000 people to review and remove ads," by Recode's Kurt Wagner: "Facebook will hire 1,000 additional people to the internal team that reviews and removes Facebook ads, according to details shared via email with Recode by a Facebook spokesperson. The company also said it will invest more in machine learning to 'better understand when to flag and take down ads,' and expand its advertising content policies to stop ads that use even 'subtle expressions of violence.' ... The company will also start to 'require more thorough documentation' from advertisers who want to buy political ads on Facebook." <http://bit.ly/2wvii1c>

MEDIAWATCH -- HAMBY'S NEXT EPISODE: SNEAK PEEK -- The second episode of Snapchat's weekly series "Good Luck America" starts airing today. Per Snapchat: "Host Peter Hamby visits South Carolina and offers an inside look at President Trump's Republican base, the base he refers to in poll numbers, why they are so loyal and as a result, why Republicans in Congress are hesitant to cross Trump. Hamby speaks with average citizens as well as South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, South Carolina Republican Chairman Drew McKissick, Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst and Greenville County Republican Chairman Nate Leupp."

--**WASHINGTONIAN** -- **"The Most Powerful Women in Washington":** Those on the

list in media included Carrie Budoff Brown, Elisabeth Bumiller, Kate Nocera, Julie Pace, and Janet Rodriguez. **Full list** <http://bit.ly/2xcpMuq>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) last night at Centrolina ... Donna Shalala at lunch at i Ricchi Monday, with her former chief of staff Mary Beth Donahue and Obama HHS deputy secretary Bill Corr, as well as her former HHS aides Rich Tarplin and Melissa Skolfield.

OUT AND ABOUT -- Michael and Affie Beschloss, Kyle Gibson, David and Eve Ignatius, Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan, Bob Woodward and Elsa Walsh, and Angus and Sissy Yates hosted a book party last night for Sally Quinn and her new book "Finding Magic: A Spiritual Memoir" at her Georgetown house. The dress code for the party was "magical, spiritual, festive." **\$17.39 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2g7zmV0>

SPOTTED: Jon Meacham, Evan Thomas, Dan Glickman, Robert Allbritton, Patrick Steel, Susan Glasser and Peter Baker, Andrea Mitchell, Mark Leibovich, UAE Ambassador Yousef Al-Otaiba, Jonathan Martin and Betsy Fisher Martin, Bob Barnett, Justice Stephen Breyer, Glenn Thrush, Michael Falcone, Meridith McGraw, Evan Osnos and Sarabeth Berman, Michael Kinsley, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-Texas), Jane Mayer and Bill Hamilton, British Ambassador Kim Darroch, Neera Tanden, Tammy Haddad, Robert Draper, David Fahrenthold, Margaret Carlson, Fred Ryan, Cathy Merrill Williams, Phil Rucker, Paul Wood, Carol Melton.

OUT AND ABOUT -- VP MIKE PENCE delivered remarks at the RNC "Fall Gala" at the Mellon Auditorium last night. **SPOTTED:** Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin, Sen. Cory Gardner (Colo.), Sen. Ted Cruz (Texas), NRCC Chair Steve Stivers (Ohio), RNC Chair Ronna McDaniel, FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee, Jim Nicholson, Brian Ballard, David Tamasi, Mike Rose and Suhail Khan.

-- D'ANDRA SIMMONS LOCKE attended a viewing party of Bravo's "Real Housewives of Dallas" party hosted by Christina and Jason Mulvihill, Marcie Kinzel and Loretta Greene. **SPOTTED:** Elizabeth Pinkerton, Jana Toner, Tara Bradshaw, Bryan Brendle, Bill Greene, Catherine Hicks, Lindsey Walters, Kristin Bodendstedt, Shelley Hymes, Christina Culver, Kanya Bennett, Maggie Snipes and Catherine Hicks.

TRANSITION -- Stephan Thompson, former campaign manager to Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, has launched Wisconsin Next PAC, a Super PAC supporting State Senator Leah Vukmir's campaign for U.S. Senate. Thompson is joined by Terry Sullivan and Alex Conant, pollsters Brian Tringali and BJ Martino, and digital consultant Matt Oczkowski. ... **Ed Cox**, legislative policy adviser to Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), is joining Prime Policy Group.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Sarah Feinberg, principal and CEO of Feinberg Strategies, a consulting firm she recently started, former Federal Railroad Administrator, Obama WH and DOT alum, and former Cap Hill staffer. **How she got her start in politics:** "In the early 80s I went door to door with my Dad in southern West Virginia as he campaigned for a seat in the West Virginia legislature. It was a child care solution at the time, but it was also a great education." **Read her Playbook Plus Q&A:**
<http://politi.co/2fHXoF7>

BIRTHDAYS: Rep. Karen Bass (D-Calif.) is 64 ... Rep. Sean Duffy (R-Wisc.) is 46 ... Asawin "Swin" Suebsaeng, a White House reporter at The Daily Beast (hat tip: Tim Mak) ... Politico's Eric Wolff ... Jonathan Lamy, RIAA's EVP for communications and marketing ... GMMB partner J. Toscano ... Katie Whelan ... Pam Gilbert of Cuneo Gilbert & LaDuca ... Sally Painter (h/ts Jon Haber) ... AP's Darlene Superville and Verena Dobnik ... Tim Albrecht, deputy chief of staff and senior adviser to Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds ... Betsey Apple ... Bradley Tusk, founder and CEO of Tusk Holdings ... Rev. Al Sharpton is 63 ... former Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) is 74 ... Beth Jones ... Laura Brown ... Edie Emery, senior director for strategic marketing and publicity at SESAC ... former House Appropriations Chairman David Obey (D-Wisc.) is 79 ... Sean Gibbons ... Cristóbal Joshua Alex ... Kimberly Leonard, senior health care policy reporter for the Washington Examiner ...

... **Logan Dobson**, director of data and analytics at the NRSC ... Maegan Vazquez, WH reporter for IJR (h/t Mallory Shelbourne) ... Chelsea Radler ... Maury Nolen ... Politico Europe's Margherita Florence Martinelli ... DISCUS' Eric Reller (h/ts Ben Jenkins and Benny Johnson) ... Bianca Swalem ... Eden Joyner, SVP of biz development at Revolution Messaging ... Kevin Kelley ... Chris Michel ... Mark Hamrick ... former Alabama Gov. Bob Riley is 73 ... Peter Stegner ... Jennifer Bland, Merck's executive director of government relations and policy and counsel ... Robert Allan Ford ... Megan Franko ... Nancy Gabriner, senior editorial producer at ABC News ... Megan Franko ... Tess Di Martino ... Scott Richardson ... Ben Adler ... Josh Kinney is 29 ... Darrell Brock Jr. ... former Rep. Charlie Melancon (D-La.) is 7-0 ... former Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D-Pa.) is 69 ... Joel Haubrich ... Bert Finsand ... Eva Mosakowski (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Koch Industries:** It's estimated that by the year 2030 there will be two billion motor vehicles on the world's highways - twice the number currently on the road. Koch companies are already preparing for this challenge with ideas for improving fuel efficiency while still embracing safety. Our researchers are integrating aerodynamic systems into automotive grilles to provide up to 20% weight savings and up to 30% better aero performance. Each step forward puts us closer to the bigger goal of responsibly powering far more automobiles than ever before. From transportation and technology to food, clothing and shelter, Koch is anticipating the needs of tomorrow and working on the solutions today. The quest for better never stops, and our more than 70,000 U.S. employees are helping to lead the way. See them in action at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:40:16 PM
Subject: Re: APPROVAL: well, then on a different subject...

Change "our" to "the"

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 19, 2017, at 11:37 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Friedman, Lisa [<mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: well, then on a different subject...

Got a comment about Definers dropping out of the contract?

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Ford, Hayley[ford.hayley@epa.gov]; Letendre, Daisy[letendre.daisy@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]; Bennett, Tate[Bennett.Tate@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tue 11/7/2017 3:08:01 PM
Subject: EPA Morning News Highlights 11.7.17
EPA Morning News Highlights 11.7.17.docx

EPA Morning News Highlights 11.7.17

The Daily Caller: Enviro Freak Out After Trump Officials Push Coal Agenda During UN Climate Talks

Officials attending a UN climate change conference are livid that officials with the Trump administration are using the talk to hype up how fossil fuels can help reduce global warming. An adviser to President Donald Trump is expected to take part in a pro-coal presentation during the so-called COP23 conference in Bonn, Germany. Participants believe it's "beyond absurd" to champion fossil fuels at an event designed to brainstorm solutions to climate change. "It is undeniable that fossil fuels will be used for the foreseeable future, and it is in everyone's interest that they be efficient and clean," a White House spokesman told reporters Monday, referring to Trump's efforts to promote fossil fuels at the G20 meeting this year.

The Daily Signal: We Hear You: A 'Positive,' 'Encouraging' Interview With EPA Chief Scott Pruitt

Dear Daily Signal: What an outstanding interview. I'm so encouraged. Rob Bluey asked relevant, important questions, and Scott Pruitt's responses actually went to the issues ("Trump's EPA Chief Charts a New Course: An Interview With Scott Pruitt"). It's good information for the American people to know, that our Environmental Protection Agency administrator actually has a well-conceived plan and is working diligently to carry it out. I wish you would do similar interviews with other Cabinet-level officials, such as Dr. Ben Carson at HUD. I read The Daily Signal every day, and appreciate the good coverage. It truly helps me to know our government and what is happening on the political scene. You are to be commended for asking questions that get to the heart of the issues, then giving Pruitt time and space to give meaningful answers.—Roger Pritchett

Charleston Gazette-Mail: EPA right to plan for hearing in WV

You may remember that when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was holding hearings on its Clean Power Plan, the agency was at pains to avoid giving people in coal states opportunities to comment. The 2015 hearings were held in Atlanta, Denver, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C. Now, the EPA is planning to rescind the Clean Power Plan, and hearings are scheduled on that. One of them will be in Charleston on Nov. 28-29. Good for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for insisting that people affected by his agency's plans will have opportunities to comment on them. It's about time.

National Morning News Highlights 11.7.17

The Associated Press: In Seoul, Trump calls for North Korea to 'make a deal'

In a striking shift of tone, President Donald Trump abandoned his aggressive rhetoric toward North Korea on Tuesday, signaling a willingness to negotiate as he urged Pyongyang to "come to the table" and "make a deal." Trump, in his first day on the Korean peninsula, again pushed Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons program, but sounded an optimistic note, saying confidently, if vaguely, "ultimately, it'll all work out." And while he said the United States would use military force if needed, he expressed his strongest inclination yet to deal with rising tensions with Pyongyang through diplomacy. "It makes sense for North Korea to come to the table and make a deal that is good for the people of North Korea and for the world," Trump said during a news conference alongside South Korean president Moon Jae-in. "I do see certain movement."

Fox News: Saudi Arabia calls missile launch 'act of war' by Iran, vows retaliation

Saudi Arabia on Monday called the attempted missile attack on Riyadh's main airport this weekend an "act of war" by Iran and vowed to retaliate. Houthi rebels in Yemen, who have been fighting Saudi-backed forces there for several years, claimed responsibility for firing the ballistic missile on Saturday. The missile traveled more than 500 miles before Saudi Arabia intercepted it. The official Saudi Press Agency charged that debris from the missile proved that it was made in Iran and smuggled into Yemen. American officials have previously charged that Iran has armed the Houthi rebels. The attempted missile strike was "a blatant act of military aggression by the Iranian regime and could rise to be considered as an act of war," the Saudi Press Agency said in a statement.

Reuters: Chinese fans prepare to welcome rich, powerful, 'free-spirit' Trump

He may be a divisive figure back home, but U.S. President Donald Trump will be landing in friendly territory when he arrives in Beijing on Wednesday, judging by Chinese social media. On platforms such as the Twitter-like Sina Weibo, Trump's Chinese supporters, who admire his

business success and a free-wheeling style unconstrained by political correctness, are far more prominent than detractors. While no comprehensive survey has been done to assess the size and intensity of Trump's popularity in China, several pundits suggest he has broad and vocal support. "Chinese people are impressed that he is extremely rich, he loves things splendid and magnificent, and he loves to show off. Not every billionaire is like that," said Yin Hao, who translates American news and comedy clips for his nearly one million followers on Weibo.

Reuters: Hard-fought Virginia governor's race to test Trump's clout

A bitterly fought governor's race in Virginia leads a slate of state and local elections on Tuesday that offer an early test of President Donald Trump's political influence and possible strategies for both parties in next year's midterm elections. New Jersey voters also will pick a new governor to replace outgoing Republican Chris Christie. Several big cities will select mayors and conservative Utah will hold a special election to replace U.S. Representative Jason Chaffetz, a Republican who stepped down before his term ended. The marquee contest is in Virginia, where polls show Democrat Ralph Northam has a slight edge over Republican Ed Gillespie in a nasty governor's race that will offer clues about the country's political mood. Gillespie, a Washington lobbyist and former Republican National Committee chairman, has kept his distance from Trump but embraced the president's combative campaign style with hard-edged ads hitting Northam on divisive issues such as immigration, gang crime and Confederate statues.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-slow-walks-decisions-on-who-cant-meet-ozone-rules/article/2639820>

EPA slow-walks decisions on who can't meet ozone rules

By John Siciliano, 11/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency isn't saying which areas of the country are not complying with the Obama administration's 2015 national air quality standards for smog-forming ozone just yet.

"The ozone designation process is complex and requires ongoing and extensive conversations with state and local agencies," said EPA administrator Scott Pruitt. "As we move forward, the

agency will be able to prioritize, be more responsive to local needs, and move forward on a case-by-case basis.”

The EPA is required under the Clean Air Act to designate non-attainment areas of the country under the ozone rule by Oct. 1. These are areas of the country that cannot meet the regulations. Once the non-attainment areas are designated, the clock begins to tick down for states to develop and submit plans for meeting that standards.

Manufacturing and business groups had argued the original version of the updated ozone regulations would place much of the country in non-attainment, stifling heavy industry, and energy development. Critics say even pristine national parks would not be able to meet the standard.

EPA's final regulation was less strict, but industry and states continue to argue they have yet to comply with the previous 2008 ozone standards. A GOP-backed bill on Capitol Hill looks to block the 2015 rules from going into effect until states have met the previous rules.

The Trump EPA argues it is following the law in implementing the ozone standard, though it missed the Oct. 1 deadline. It is doing so by designating those areas that are in compliance with the ozone rules before moving on to the non-attainment areas, according to the agency.

"Consistent with states' and tribes' recommendations, EPA finds that most areas of the country — 2,646 of the more than 3,100 counties in the United States -- meet the standards for ground-level ozone," the agency said Monday. "These areas do not have any increased compliance burdens."

EPA continues to examine how other areas are "meeting attainment thresholds," saying peer-reviewed science indicates "international emissions and background ozone" can result in higher ozone pollution levels, suggesting it will seek to account for those distortions before making final assessments.

"The agency intends to address these areas in a separate future action."

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/11/06/enviros-freak-out-after-trump-officials-push-coal-agenda-during-un-climate-talks/>

Enviros Freak Out After Trump Officials Push Coal Agenda During UN Climate Talks

By Chris White, 11/6/17

Officials attending a UN climate change conference are livid that officials with the Trump administration are using the talk to hype up how fossil fuels can help reduce global warming.

An adviser to President Donald Trump is expected to take part in a pro-coal presentation during the so-called COP23 conference in Bonn, Germany. Participants believe it's "beyond absurd" to champion fossil fuels at an event designed to brainstorm solutions to climate change.

"It is undeniable that fossil fuels will be used for the foreseeable future, and it is in everyone's interest that they be efficient and clean," a White House spokesman told reporters Monday, referring to Trump's efforts to promote fossil fuels at the G20 meeting this year.

Activists were not buying that position.

"Fossil fuels having any role in tackling climate change is beyond absurd. It is dangerous," Andrew Norton, director of the International Institute for Environment and Development, told reporters about Trump's reasoning. The conference is "no place for pushing the fossil fuel agenda," he said, adding that the White House must pitch a more realistic approach.

U.S. carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, meanwhile, have fallen about 12 percent since 2005, due primarily to the increased production of natural gas production from hydraulic fracturing,

according to a report earlier this year from the Energy Information Administration (EIA).

EIA's report attributes falling CO2 emissions to "decreased use of coal and the increased use of natural gas for electricity generation." Natural gas emits about half the CO2 of coal power and is already cheaper than coal in many locations due to fracking.

The Daily Signal

<http://dailysignal.com/2017/11/05/we-hear-you-a-positive-encouraging-interview-with-epa-chief-scott-pruitt/>

We Hear You: A 'Positive,' 'Encouraging' Interview With EPA Chief Scott Pruitt

By Ken McIntyre, 11/5/17

Editor's note: The Daily Signal's audience found much to like in an interview of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt conducted by Rob Bluey, our editor-in-chief. Today we focus on that among other environmental matters. Be sure to write us at letters@dailysignal.com.—Ken McIntyre

Dear Daily Signal: What an outstanding interview. I'm so encouraged. Rob Bluey asked relevant, important questions, and Scott Pruitt's responses actually went to the issues ("Trump's EPA Chief Charts a New Course: An Interview With Scott Pruitt").

It's good information for the American people to know, that our Environmental Protection Agency administrator actually has a well-conceived plan and is working diligently to carry it out. I wish you would do similar interviews with other Cabinet-level officials, such as Dr. Ben Carson at HUD.

I read The Daily Signal every day, and appreciate the good coverage. It truly helps me to know our government and what is happening on the political scene. You are to be commended for asking questions that get to the heart of the issues, then giving Pruitt time and space to give

meaningful answers.—Roger Pritchett

As President Trump would say, I greatly enjoyed Rob Bluey's Q&A with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. It's truly refreshing to have common sense prevailing over bureaucratic lunacy.

I hope the president has installed more people of Mr. Pruitt's caliber throughout all federal agencies. We need fewer bureaucrats and more efficiency. I send emails to my elected officials reminding them that bureaucrats should not be making laws.—Brannen Edwards

Thanks for your in-depth article. The regulatory "reform" rather than deregulation strikes the right cord with me. Three big ones for me:

- The cottage industry by environmental groups using "sue and settle" to enact nontransparent rules while sucking up taxpayer dollars to feed their livelihood is going bye-bye. Hip hip hooray!
- Getting back to basics with the true stewards of the environment is long overdue. The original conservationist, the farmers, ranchers, lumbermen, and individual states having new authority.
- Reducing permits times to six months instead of 10 to 15 years ... a miracle.

—Evelyn Zur, Parker, Colorado

You spotlighted a diamond in so many ways that Scott Pruitt looks like the diadem he is. Measure Trump by Gorsuch? Sure, he's promising. Measure Trump by Pruitt? Absolutely.

This guy is getting his job done, and the ripples of his results will change America for the better. Thanks for a stellar job.—John Leary

Rob Bluey's on-camera interview with Scott Pruitt contains positive and, frankly, hopeful information. Is it possible to get a transcript? I'd like to print a copy I can refer to and share. [We published it here, Pat.]

Thank you for the work The Daily Signal does. It is so difficult to hear rational and truthful voices amid the clamor and liberal hysteria of most news outlets.—Pat Parker

That was an incredible interview with an equally incredible public servant. I wish we could hear more things like that from the media. This is what the people need to know about making America great again. Thank you, and keep up the good work.—J.M. Clement Milam

Thank you for an interview that helped me to understand Scott Pruitt, and to clarify this administration's commitment to environmental quality with economy.—Dan Dean

I was impressed. Sounds like our president made a great decision when he chose Scott Pruitt to lead the EPA.—Hayward Beeson

Excellent, thoughtful, informative interview. With so much media noise and bias, I've become a scanner and headline reader. This article encouraged me start reading The Daily Signal for quality news.—Bill Weldon

It is so nice to have some optimism again. What a great interview. I am very impressed with Pruitt and his straightforward answers. What a good man. We need more articles like this on The Daily Signal.—Jared C. Murray

Never done this before, but thanks for a great interview. I'm going to try passing it around to those on the left as well as the right in an effort to win some minds. Great job, great journalism.—George Brunner

It is important to me to understand Pruitt's thinking and actions regarding the complex issues

facing his department and our country. I got more and better information from your writing than I have heard or read from any other news sources.—Nancy Carter

Targeting Conflicts of Interest in EPA Science

Dear Daily Signal: Regarding Kevin Mooney's story on EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's intention to go after conflicts of interest: While progressives denounce scientists hired by oil companies, they have been doing the exact same thing to a much worse degree through the Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA Chief Set to Bar Government-Funded Experts From Agency's Science Panels").

No expert witness who has access to government funding, other than a fee being paid for their time as a witness, should ever be allowed to testify. That is just common understanding of a conflict of interest. Witnesses are going to steer their findings to reflect that which keeps their paycheck coming.

If we bother to look at what is being referred to as scientific proof of most claims about the environment and nature, even a well-informed layman can understand that most of it is not scientific at all.—Robin Boyd

Interestingly, the federal government requires all corporations, other business entities, and even nonprofits to have strict conflict-of-interest policies and procedures in place. Yet government is far and away the biggest abuser when it comes to conflict of interest.

Same thing with whistleblower policies. Righting this wrong is part of what is meant by the term "drain the swamp."—Mark Simmons

If Pruitt can deliver we will all be grateful. Bless the man.—Don Rhudy

All Scott Pruitt is saying is that he will ignore research paid by government grants from

researchers who do not conform to the conservative, closed-minded policy. In other words, if the findings were not consistent to debunking global warming their findings will be ignored. That's really good science.—Joe A. Elizondo

Kevin Mooney's reporting pointed out that the EPA has been financing studies that support the central EPA objective, which is to build the agency's power and scope. The EPA also supports "experts" who agree with the agency. Pruitt has stated that his objective is to create transparency and make scientific decisions based on observable facts rather than on faulty models. It makes sense.—Bill Tanksley

The Charleston Gazzette-Mail

https://www.wvgazettemail.com/opinion/daily_mail_opinion/daily_mail_editorials/guest-editorial-wheeling-epa-right-to-plan-for-hearing-in/article_971fdab2-e9a5-5a83-bb9b-9a0b404cad1f.html

Guest editorial (Wheeling): EPA right to plan for hearing in WV

By LTE, 11/6/17

You may remember that when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was holding hearings on its Clean Power Plan, the agency was at pains to avoid giving people in coal states opportunities to comment. The 2015 hearings were held in Atlanta, Denver, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C.

Now, the EPA is planning to rescind the Clean Power Plan, and hearings are scheduled on that.

One of them will be in Charleston on Nov. 28-29.

Good for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for insisting that people affected by his agency's plans will have opportunities to comment on them.

It's about time.

The Associated Press

<https://apnews.com/19aece3ccf5c4c9496a777497379e709/In-Seoul,-Trump-calls-for-North-Korea-to-%22make-a-deal%22>

In Seoul, Trump calls for North Korea to 'make a deal'

By Johnathan Lemire and Jill Colvin, 11/7/17

In a striking shift of tone, President Donald Trump abandoned his aggressive rhetoric toward North Korea on Tuesday, signaling a willingness to negotiate as he urged Pyongyang to “come to the table” and “make a deal.”

Trump, in his first day on the Korean peninsula, again pushed Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons program, but sounded an optimistic note, saying confidently, if vaguely, “ultimately, it’ll all work out.” And while he said the United States would use military force if needed, he expressed his strongest inclination yet to deal with rising tensions with Pyongyang through diplomacy.

“It makes sense for North Korea to come to the table and make a deal that is good for the people of North Korea and for the world,” Trump said during a news conference alongside South Korean president Moon Jae-in. “I do see certain movement.”

Trump said he’s seen “a lot of progress” in dealing with North Korea though he stopped short of saying whether he wanted direct diplomatic talks.

Trump also underscored the United States’ military options, noting that three aircraft carrier groups and a nuclear submarine had been deployed to the region. But he said “we hope to God we never have to use” the arsenal.

And at an evening banquet, Trump teased an “exciting day tomorrow for many reasons that people will find out.” He did not elaborate.

During his first day in South Korea, Trump at least temporarily lowered the temperature on his usually incendiary language about the North. There were no threats of unleashing “fire and fury” on North Korea, as Trump previously warned, nor did Trump revive his derisive nickname for North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un, “Little Rocket Man.”

But he did decree that the dictator is “threatening millions and millions of lives, so needlessly” and highlighted a central mission of his first lengthy Asia trip: to enlist many nations in the region, including China and Russia, to cut off Pyongyang’s economic lifeblood and pressure it into giving up its nuclear program.

Moon, who has been eager to solidify a friendship with Trump, said he hoped the president’s visit would be a moment of inflection in the stand-off with North Korea and said the two leaders had “agreed to resolve the North Korea nuclear issue in peaceful manner” that would “bring permanent peace” to the peninsula.

“I know that you have put this issue at the top of your security agenda,” said Moon. “So I hope that your visit to Korea and to the Asia Pacific region will serve as an opportunity to relieve some of the anxiety that the Korean people have due to North Korea’s provocations and also serve as a turning point in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue.”

Trump did bemoan that previous administrations had not handled Pyongyang, saying “Now is not the right time to be dealing with this but it’s what I got.”

He began his day in South Korea with a visit to Camp Humphreys, a joint US-Korean military base, but even as he walked among the weapons of war, he struck a hopeful note, saying: “it always works out.”

Much as he did in Japan, Trump indicated he would place the interlocking issues of security and trade at the heart of his visit. He praised South Korea for significant purchases of American military equipment and urged the two nations to have more equitable trade relationship. Moon said the two agreed on lifting the warhead payload limits on South Korean ballistic missiles and cooperating on strengthening South Korea's defense capabilities through the acquisition or development of advanced weapons systems.

Trump also pushed his economic agenda, saying that the current US-Korea trade agreement was "not successful and not very good for the United States." But he said that he had a "terrific" meeting scheduled on trade, adding, "hopefully that'll start working out and working out so that we create lots of jobs in the United States, which is one of the very important reasons I'm here."

At Camp Humphreys, Trump shook hands with American and Korean service members and sat with troops for lunch in a large mess hall, a visit intended to underscore the countries' ties and South Korea's commitment to contributing to its own defense.

But Trump was expected to skip the customary trip to the demilitarized zone separating north and south — a pilgrimage made by every U.S. president except one since Ronald Reagan as a demonstration of solidarity with the South. Trump has not ruled out a military strike and backed up his strong words about North Korea by sending a budget request to Capitol Hill on Monday for \$4 billion to support "additional efforts to detect, defeat, and defend against any North Korean use of ballistic missiles against the United States, its deployed forces, allies, or partners."

North Korea has fired off more than a dozen missiles this year but none in nearly two months.

Trump and Moon agree on the need to pressure the North with sanctions and other deterrence measures. But Trump has repeatedly insisted that all military options are on the table and suggested that Moon was being too lenient on the North. Moon, meanwhile, favors dialogue as the best strategy for defusing the nuclear tension and vehemently opposes a potential military clash that could cause enormous casualties in South Korea.

Moon rolled out an elaborate arrival ceremony for Trump at South Korea's stately presidential residence known as the Blue House. He made a point of saluting the recent gains of the U.S. stock market, a favorite Trump talking point, and congratulating the president a day ahead of the

one-year anniversary of his election.

Fox News

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/11/07/saudi-arabia-calls-missile-launch-act-war-by-iran-vows-retaliation.html>

Saudi Arabia calls missile launch 'act of war' by Iran, vows retaliation

By Gregg Re, 11/7/17

Saudi Arabia on Monday called the attempted missile attack on Riyadh's main airport this weekend an "act of war" by Iran and vowed to retaliate.

Houthi rebels in Yemen, who have been fighting Saudi-backed forces there for several years, claimed responsibility for firing the ballistic missile on Saturday. The missile traveled more than 500 miles before Saudi Arabia intercepted it.

The official Saudi Press Agency charged that debris from the missile proved that it was made in Iran and smuggled into Yemen. American officials have previously charged that Iran has armed the Houthi rebels.

The attempted missile strike was "a blatant act of military aggression by the Iranian regime and could rise to be considered as an act of war," the Saudi Press Agency said in a statement.

Saudi Arabia "reserves its right to respond to Iran in the appropriate time and manner, in accordance with international law and based on the right of self-defense," the statement continued.

Speaking to CNN, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed al-Jubeir unambiguously charged that Iran had effectively declared war.

"We see this as an act of war," he said. "Iran can not lob missiles at Saudi cities and towns and expect us not to take steps."

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi called Saudi Arabia's claims "false, irresponsible, destructive and provocative," according to the Iranian news agency Tasnim.

The dramatic escalation in tension between the two rival nations came just a day after dozens of princes, senior military officers, businessmen and top officials were arrested in a sweeping anti-corruption probe in Saudi Arabia.

The unprecedented arrests were seen as a sign that 32-year-old Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who came to power in June, was seeking to aggressively consolidate power.

Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-trump-asia-china-popularity/chinese-fans-prepare-to-welcome-rich-powerful-free-spirit-trump-idUSKBN1D71BW>

Chinese fans prepare to welcome rich, powerful, 'free-spirit' Trump

By Pei Li, Christian Shepherd, 11/7/17

He may be a divisive figure back home, but U.S. President Donald Trump will be landing in friendly territory when he arrives in Beijing on Wednesday, judging by Chinese social media.

On platforms such as the Twitter-like Sina Weibo, Trump's Chinese supporters, who admire his

business success and a free-wheeling style unconstrained by political correctness, are far more prominent than detractors.

While no comprehensive survey has been done to assess the size and intensity of Trump's popularity in China, several pundits suggest he has broad and vocal support.

"Chinese people are impressed that he is extremely rich, he loves things splendid and magnificent, and he loves to show off. Not every billionaire is like that," said Yin Hao, who translates American news and comedy clips for his nearly one million followers on Weibo.

Yin said his translated Trump-related video clips sometimes attract thousands of comments, where some supporters engage in name-calling and invective in defending the president.

"They will keep posting comments to defend Trump, mock his opponents under all news clips that involve Trump, and rebuke any comments that are not in favor of Trump," Yin said.

Chen Jibing, a Shanghai-based political commentator, said Trump's Chinese fan base is different than that for previous foreign leaders such as his predecessor, Barack Obama, and for British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who enjoyed widespread but tepid support.

"Chinese Trump fans are seriously and truly invested, and you had better not make light of offending them," Chen wrote in a social media post to his millions of followers.

POLITICALLY INCORRECT

While Trump encountered protests during his visits to Japan and South Korea on the first two legs of his 12-day Asian tour, such scenes are unlikely in China, which tightly controls public gatherings, with media and the internet subject to censorship.

China's ambassador to the United States, Cui Tiankai, said Trump will receive a "state visit-plus" experience in Beijing. He is expected to go to the Forbidden City and participate in an inspection of Chinese troops, though China has released few other details.

Trump's popularity in China largely comes from his disdain for political correctness and defiance of traditional liberal western views, which many Chinese consider elitist and unrealistic, Chen said.

His criticism of the U.S. trade deficit with China, for example, is seen by many in the country as standard U.S. political talk, some pundits say.

"In China, realists hold a deep-rooted belief that the rule of the jungle means the strong prey on the weak," Chen said. "For them, the world is not split into right and wrong, good or evil, it is only success or failure, the powerful and the weak."

Factual errors or gaffes by Trump tend to be ignored by his Chinese fans or explained away as harmless mistakes made by a leader who writes his own rules.

In Japan on Monday, Trump told Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that the Japanese economy was not performing as well as the United States' and appeared to mistakenly say that Japan's economy was the world's second-largest. It is actually third, after China's.

An editor at a major state publication told Reuters was inclined to be forgiving about Trump's remark to Abe: "He's a free spirit. No one can tell him what to do."

Many on Chinese social media see Trump as a figure of fun.

"Rather than being a president, Trump is more like a comedian!" one Weibo user wrote.

EXCELLENT CHILDREN

In a country where parents are traditionally judged by the success of their children, Trump scores extra points for his daughter Ivanka, a businesswoman and currently advisor to President Trump, and her Mandarin-speaking children.

One Chinese state publication said that all five of Trump's children are a testament to his character.

"You can tell what parents are like through their children's success. Trump's five children are all excellent, it means he is a very successful father," the China Education Daily said on its social media account.

Ivanka Trump is sometimes referred to as "goddess" on Chinese social media, where some were upset that the first daughter would not be accompanying her father to Beijing.

"SAD! Ivanka is not coming to China," said Jiang Xiaofeng, a journalist with Phoenix TV on Sina Weibo, appropriating one of Donald Trump's favorite Twitter exclamations.

Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election/hard-fought-virginia-governors-race-to-test-trumps-clout-idUSKBN1D71D7>

Hard-fought Virginia governor's race to test Trump's clout

By John Whitesides, 11/7/17

A bitterly fought governor's race in Virginia leads a slate of state and local elections on Tuesday that offer an early test of President Donald Trump's political influence and possible strategies for both parties in next year's midterm elections.

New Jersey voters also will pick a new governor to replace outgoing Republican Chris Christie. Several big cities will select mayors and conservative Utah will hold a special election to replace U.S. Representative Jason Chaffetz, a Republican who stepped down before his term ended.

The marquee contest is in Virginia, where polls show Democrat Ralph Northam has a slight edge over Republican Ed Gillespie in a nasty governor's race that will offer clues about the country's political mood.

Gillespie, a Washington lobbyist and former Republican National Committee chairman, has kept his distance from Trump but embraced the president's combative campaign style with hard-edged ads hitting Northam on divisive issues such as immigration, gang crime and Confederate statues.

The ads put Northam, the state's lieutenant governor, on the defensive and helped Gillespie gain ground in opinion polls in recent weeks in Virginia, where Democrat Hillary Clinton beat Trump by 5 percentage points last year.

A Gillespie win would be the latest in a series of setbacks for Democrats, who suffered losses in four contested congressional special elections earlier this year despite grassroots liberal enthusiasm for resisting Trump.

ANOTHER SETBACK FOR DEMOCRATS?

Democrats fear it would also give Republicans a green light to exploit similar divisive cultural issues across the country next year, when all 435 House seats and 33 of the Senate's 100 seats will be up for election. Republicans currently control both chambers.

“Gillespie’s ads played on every fear and dark impulse, and if we lose we are going to see a lot more of that,” Democratic strategist Dane Strother said.

Gillespie rejected that characterization and said he was gaining ground against Northam because of his substantive policies and plans to bolster Virginia’s economy. Trump, who endorsed Gillespie but never campaigned for him, backed that view on Monday.

“The state of Virginia economy, under Democrat rule, has been terrible. If you vote Ed Gillespie tomorrow, it will come roaring back!” he said on Twitter.

In response, Northam tweeted that voting was “the best way to refute Trump’s lies.” The Virginia economy had an unemployment rate of 3.7 percent in September, better than all but 13 states and below the national rate of just over 4 percent.

Gillespie’s campaign has blasted an ad aired by an outside group supporting Northam, quickly taken down, that showed a white man in a pickup truck with a Confederate flag and a Gillespie sticker chasing down minority children.

“The momentum is clearly on our side,” Gillespie told Fox News on Monday.

In the governor’s race in Democratic-leaning New Jersey, Democrat Phil Murphy, a former investment banker and U.S. ambassador to Germany, has a comfortable lead in polls over Republican Kim Guadagno, the state’s lieutenant governor, who has been hampered by her association with the unpopular Christie.

In local races, Democratic Mayors Bill de Blasio in New York and Marty Walsh in Boston are expected to cruise to re-election, while Detroit, Atlanta, Charlotte, North Carolina, and Seattle also will pick mayors.

In Utah, Republican John Curtis, a strong Trump supporter, is a heavy favorite to fill the congressional seat left vacant by Chaffetz.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

Stock market hit yet another all-time record high yesterday. There is great confidence in the moves that my Administration....

3.3K 4.8K 23K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

Replying to @realDonaldTrump

....is making. Working very hard on TAX CUTS for the middle class, companies and jobs!

3.2K 3.5K 19K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

Ralph Northam will allow crime to be rampant in Virginia. He's weak on crime, weak on our GREAT VETS, Anti-Second Amendment....

5.0K 4.7K 17K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

@EdWGillespie will totally turn around the high crime and poor economic performance of VA. MS-13 and crime will be gone. Vote today, ASAP!

4.6K 5.3K 20K

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Media
Sent: Thur 8/24/2017 10:09:39 AM
Subject: Morning Media: Reading the Sinclair tea leaves -- Wall Street Journal editor taking heat -- The Guardian still waiting on Gianforte

By Alex Weprin | 08/24/2017 06:07 AM EDT

With Cristiano Lima

READING THE SINCLAIR TEA LEAVES: Sinclair Broadcasting has filed a document with the FCC responding to critics of its proposed acquisition of Tribune Broadcasting. You can read the whole thing [here](#), but I thought it would be instructive to look at it through the lens of recent coverage of the company.

-Is Sinclair trying to launch a Fox News competitor? Rumors of Sinclair taking on Fox have been rampant since the Tribune deal was announced, and recent [reports](#) have suggested that Sinclair might be talking to Steve Bannon about a partnership with Breitbart. Fox has also [suggested](#) that it may strip the Fox affiliation from the Tribune stations Sinclair is seeking to acquire. So is a Fox News competitor in the works? The filing gives little away, but it does note that Sinclair wants to be able to compete with the likes of Fox for advertising dollars: "By increasing the national footprint in which Sinclair stations broadcast and sell advertising, particularly by adding stations in the largest markets, such as New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, Sinclair will be better situated to sell advertising to national advertisers who are seeking a national platform. This will create an additional competitor in the network advertising space..."

-Is Sinclair biased, and does it force conservative programming on its local stations? Sinclair does not directly address its own political leanings, but it does imply that the rest of the broadcast media tilts one way, and that they are providing "a new voice" to the market. Sinclair has a large D.C. bureau, and uses it to funnel national news stories to its local affiliates.

"The Washington D.C. news bureau contributes not only to the quantity and quality of information available to local viewers around the country, but adds to the diversity of viewpoints on national issues by providing a new voice in addition to those of ABC, NBC and CBS, which currently dominate the national broadcast news offerings in most local markets," the filing says. "Petitioners further allege that the transaction is against the public interest because Sinclair presents biased or 'conservative' news coverage. Taken at face value, petitioners arguments would suggest that Sinclair's acquisition of Tribune would increase diversity, because it is adding a different 'voice' to the marketplace, just a voice with which petitioners apparently disagree."

-As for those "must-run" commentary segments [featuring](#) former Trump staffer Boris Epshteyn and conservative commentator Mark Hyman: Sinclair argues that they make up such a small chunk of programming, they don't really matter.

"Petitioners' specious claims about Sinclair programming are mostly limited to one or two brief commentaries that constitute less than 1% of the average total weekly news hours offered by

Sinclair's stations.³ All 'must-run' news programming in total (including news from the Washington, D.C. News Bureau) makes up approximately 2.5% of the total average news minutes per week. The remaining 97.5% of the news program time is devoted to local news, with the rest of each station's schedule consisting of local sports programming, network news and programming, syndicated programming, or other programming purchased or developed by Sinclair employees in the various local markets where Sinclair owns television stations."

-Sinclair is one of the most interesting companies in media today, and its proposed acquisition of Tribune would make it one of the largest media companies in the country. Despite the conventional wisdom that no one watches TV anymore, according to [Pew](#), TV is still the primary news source for most consumers, and local TV news programs have more viewers than the national news broadcasts and cable news channels.

Good morning and welcome to Morning Media. We have a meaty newsletter this morning, so grab another cup of coffee! I want to make Morning Media better and more useful to you, so please send me tips, ideas and feedback! I'm on Twitter [@alexweprin](#) and on email at alexweprin@gmail.com. Morning Media is produced with help from **Cristiano Lima** (clima@politico.com / [@ludacristiano](#)). [Archives](#). [Subscribe](#).

WALL STREET JOURNAL EDITOR GERARD BAKER IS AGAIN UNDER FIRE for his direction of the Journal's coverage of President Trump. Leaked emails [obtained by The New York Times](#) show him criticizing reporters for a draft story about the president's divisive Tuesday rally, where he repeatedly berated the media. "Sorry. This is commentary dressed up as news reporting," Baker said in response to an write-up of the rally. He later added: "Could we please just stick to reporting what he said rather than packaging it in exegesis and selective criticism?"

-It's not the first time his leadership on Trump has been questioned. A full transcript of an interview between Baker, the president and other members of his administration [obtained by POLITICO last month](#) highlighted the top editor's familiar relationship with the president and his family, again raising concerns about the Journal's coverage of the president. Read more on the [latest controversy here](#).

RALLY RATINGS: President Trump may have told attendees of Tuesday night's rally that the TV cameras were being shut off, but in reality, the rally was a ratings draw for cable news. Fox News averaged 4.4 million viewers during the rally, while MSNBC averaged 2.4 million and CNN 2 million, according to ratings data from Nielsen. One interesting quirk: MSNBC saw its ratings drop when the rally started, falling from 3.1 million for Rachel Maddow at 9 p.m., to 2.4 million during the rally. CNN meanwhile added 700,000 viewers when the rally started, while Fox News added 1.8 million viewers once the rally began.

-I thought Charlie Warzel's [take on the rally](#) was interesting. Warzel argues that Trump, who has no campaign opposition to speak of right now, is setting up the media to be the opposition. "Or, as pro-Trump media personality Jack Posobiec put it to me this morning: 'Trump's a builder. We're now in the demolition phase of this construction project,'" Warzel wrote.

-I didn't forget about the eclipse. Yesterday I gave you the cable news ratings, today, you get the broadcast numbers. ABC had a pretty incredible 7.9 million viewers tune in. CBS had just shy of 6 million, NBC had 2.6 million.

THE GUARDIAN STILL WAITING ON GIANFORTE INTERVIEW: Rep. Greg Gianforte, the man who body-slammed Guardian reporter Ben Jacobs ahead of a special election earlier this year, still has not sat down for an interview with the outlet, despite seeming to pledge to do so at his sentencing hearing. "Ben Jacobs first reached out to Congressman Gianforte for an on-the-record interview on June 22 and has been in ongoing communication with his office since then," a Guardian spokesperson told The Washington Post's Erik Wemple . "So far, the Congressman has yet to commit to this interview. However, in light of his promise to sit down for an interview with Ben in the courtroom before being sentenced on June 12, we fully expect the Congressman to be a man of his word."

ESPN PRESIDENT WEIGHS IN ON ROBERT LEE EPISODE: ESPN president John Skipper sent an email to staff at the channel last night, explaining in more detail what led up to broadcaster Robert Lee being moved off of a college football game he was supposed to host in Virginia. "I'm disappointed that the good intentions of our Charlotte colleagues have been intentionally hijacked by someone with a personal agenda, and sincerely appreciate Robert's personal input and professionalism throughout this episode," Skipper wrote. Read the whole thing here.

-Sports Illustrated's Richard Deitsch has even more detail.

"IT'S NOT PROPAGANDA BECAUSE IT'S TRUE" That's what Lara Trump, wife of Eric Trump and daughter-in-law of President Donald Trump, said in defense of her recent "real news" Facebook round-up segments on the president's campaign social media page. Lara Trump, a former "Inside Edition" producer, told the Christian Broadcasting Network that the segments she's hosted are necessary since President Trump doesn't get "a fair shake within the regular news cycle." The segments have also featured appearances from former pro-Trump pundit Kayleigh McEnany, who left CNN last month to join the Republican National Committee. Read on here.

TODAY IN TABS: I haven't picked up a copy of the latest edition of The National Enquirer, but based on the cover, it looks like they have knives out for Megyn Kelly and CNN. "Inside Kelly Ripa & Megyn Kelly's explosive showdown!" one headline blares. "Dirty secrets of CNN: Drugs. Brawls. On-set sex!" another reads. The Enquirer's owner David Pecker is friendly with President Trump, as my colleague Jack Shafer noted.

-Also, is Taylor Swift's new album tabloid themed? The album cover for "Reputation," features Swift in front of newsprint bearing her name. If anyone could make newspapers popular again, it would be her.

MUST WATCH:

-As the father of a toddler, I can relate to this news anchor who stayed remarkably calm even as

two little ones took over the studio.

-Here's [the first trailer](#) for Comedy Central's new late night show "The Opposition," which mocks alt-right outlets like InfoWars in the same way "The Colbert Report" mocked cable news.

SOUNDBITE: "Giving people a voice is not enough without having organizations dedicated to uncovering new information and analyzing it. We're going to keep experimenting with different ways to support the news industry and make sure reporters and publishers everywhere can keep doing their important work." -Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, [in a post explaining](#) how the site plans to work with journalists and newsrooms moving forward.

REVOLVING DOOR:

-Jay Solomon, who [was fired](#) by The Wall Street Journal in June over his relationship with an arms dealer, [has joined](#) The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, where he will research North Korea's weapons proliferation in the Middle East.

-Lauren Ramsby has joined Patch as director of news partnerships. Lauren was managing editor of Peter Kaplan's NY Observer, and then was managing editor of the NY Post for 10 years.

-The Daily Beast has named Mia Libby CRO. Libby was previously senior VP of sales at Fusion Media Group.

-Fox Sports baseball reporter Ken Rosenthal [will be bringing](#) his writing to subscription sports site The Athletic. He'll still do TV for Fox.

EXTRAS:

-New Los Angeles Times publisher Ross Levinsohn is set to cash in with a starting salary of \$1 million, with ample opportunities for performance bonuses. [\[Poynter\]](#)

-Here's a good interview with retiring Fox News correspondent Carl Cameron. [\[THR\]](#)

-In remembrance of Swedish journalist Kim Wall, whose remains were found in the waters near Copenhagen this week. [\[BuzzFeed\]](#)

-What The Village Voice, which just shuttered its print publication, taught us about speaking truth to power. [\[The Nation\]](#)

-"NBC Nightly News" anchor Lester Holt is profiled by Guideposts magazine. [\[Guideposts\]](#)

-The Washington Post is bringing artificial intelligence to its native ads [\[Digiday\]](#)

-The new FOMO: Have constant breaking news updates created a new tech addiction? [\[WIRED\]](#)

-Why D.C. won't soon see the likes of deceased NBC4 anchor Jim Vance again. [\[The](#)

Washingtonian]

-Hollywood's fall TV line-up leaves much to be desired in terms of diversity. [Bloomberg]

-The Financial Times digs into Bloomberg's expansion into the consulting world [FT]

-The Mic takedowns continue, this one from The Daily Caller. [Daily Caller]

-POLITICO's own Eliana Johnson joins "Pod Save America" to talk Bannon, Breitbart and Trump. [Stitcher]

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/media/tipsheets/morning-media/2017/08/24/reading-the-sinclair-tea-leaves-wall-street-journal-editor-taking-heat-the-guardian-still-waiting-on-gianforte-001339>

To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings>

This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 10/11/2017 7:45:16 PM
Subject: RE: Pruitt

Sure.

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 3:42 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Pruitt

This is good with me, can you please reply to reporter directly?

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 3:29 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Pruitt

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work

on climate adaptation,' said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency's senior adviser for climate adaptation. 'Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.' ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities "invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example. 'We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,' Scheraga said. 'They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 3:27 PM
To: Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Pruitt

Im not replying to this garbage, unless it is to say "This is nonsense"

From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 1:43 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Pruitt

His articles look like DNC blog posts.

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 1:40 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Pruitt

Ah, this is what I would call morbid:

<http://www.journalism.org/2013/06/03/newsweek-numbers/>

**Newsweek has not been audited since 2013 According to the Pew Research Center

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [<mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com>] **On Behalf Of** Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov](mailto: Bowman.Liz@epa.gov)>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Fri 8/11/2017 6:03:36 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Paxon will retire from Akin Gump — Ukrainian billionaire adds another lobbyist

By Theodoric Meyer | 08/11/2017 02:01 PM EDT

With Daniel Lippman

BILL PAXON WILL RETIRE FROM AKIN GUMP: Former **Rep. Bill Paxon** (R-N.Y.), a former **NRCC** chairman who joined **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld** in 1999 after leaving office, will retire at the end of the year, the firm announced today. "I am deeply indebted to everyone at the firm, particularly my dear friend, the late **Bob Strauss**," Paxon said in a statement. "Bob was a giant of a man who combined the very best of being a wise mentor and a kind grandfather figure, dispensing advice on both servicing clients and also raising children to a fledgling dad every day."

- Paxon's clients at the firm include **Cox Enterprises**, **Delaware North**, **Florida Citrus Mutual**, **Fluor Corporation**, **Liberty Mutual**, **PMI Global Services** and **Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America**, according to disclosure filings. "Between now and Jan. 1, I will continue to aggressively represent my client's interests and work with my Akin Gump colleagues on our many and diverse representations," Paxon said in the statement.

UKRAINIAN TYCOON HIRES ANOTHER LOBBYIST: The Ukrainian billionaire **Igor Kolomoisky** has hired a third lobbying firm to lobby for him in Washington, according to a disclosure filing. **Bruce Marks** of **Marks & Sokolov**, a Philadelphia law firm, will lobby for Kolomoisky on "business issues related to investments in the U.S." It's Marks' first lobbying registration at the federal level. While it's not clear what those "business issues" are, Kolomoisky hired former Rep. **Phil English** (R-Pa.) and **Alex Manning** of **Arent Fox** earlier this year to lobby for the issuance (presumably to Kolomoisky) of an E-2 visa, which allows foreigners to come to the United States temporarily if they invest in an American business. Former Rep. **John Sweeney** (R-N.Y.) of **SMW Partners** is also lobbying for Kolomoisky on the issue.

- Kolomoisky is a longtime foe of Russian President **Vladimir Putin** who spent millions of his own money to help arm Ukrainian forces fighting Russian-backed separatists while serving as governor of Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region, according to The Wall Street Journal. During a local TV appearance, Kolomoisky described Putin as a "schizophrenic of short stature" and "completely incapable, totally insane." "Mr. Putin, who stands 5 feet 7 inches, shot back, calling Mr. Kolomoisky a 'unique impostor' and expressing amazement that 'such a scoundrel could be appointed governor.'"

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Tips: tmeyer@politico.com. Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

HERE ARE READERS' BEST-HEELLED LOBBYISTS: After **The Washington Post's Carlos Lozada** noted that raids like the one that targeted **Paul Manafort's** home last month are invariably described as "predawn," just as lawns are always "manicured" and lobbyists are

always as "well-heeled," PI asked readers to name the best-heeled people on K Street. You didn't disappoint. "I'd go with **Erick Gustafson** [of **Marsh & McLennan**] and **Dan Berger** [of the **National Association of Federally Insured Credit Unions**]," one PI reader wrote. "Though Berger can go from a suit to Harley biker clothes in a blink of the eye!" "**Cristina Antelo** [of the **Podesta Group**] has a great stiletto collection," another reader wrote. "And she's also a badass advocate."

- Another reader, **Stephen Verdier**, a former lobbyist for the **Independent Community Bankers of America**, wrote in an email that he didn't recall his former colleagues being "particularly natty. This being Washington." But he wanted to add reporters' tendency to describe wealthy neighborhoods as "leafy" to the list of intolerable clichés. "I do a lot of political canvassing in rich ('tony') and poor neighborhoods all over Northern Virginia and the vast, vast majority are 'leafy,'" Verdier wrote. "This is the Mid-Atlantic and we get a lot of rain. Trees grow well in the rain regardless of the income level of the nearby people." Point taken!

NEW SUPER PAC WILL URGE HAWLEY TO RUN IN MISSOURI: "**Missouri Rising**, the state-based spinoff of the Republican opposition research outfit **America Rising**, is launching a super PAC encouraging Attorney General **Josh Hawley** to run for Senate against Democratic incumbent **Claire McCaskill**," **POLITICO's Kevin Robillard** reports. "The super PAC, dubbed **Missouri Rising Action** , will back Hawley with television, digital and radio ads against McCaskill, who is considered one of the most vulnerable Democratic incumbents in the country." (Is it just me or does "Missouri Rising Action" sound like part of the plot structure of a **Mark Twain** novel?)

- "Hawley has formed an exploratory committee but has not officially entered the Senate race. 'We believe that Josh Hawley is that rare once-in-a-generation candidate, which is why so many Missourians are urging him to run for the United States Senate,' former Missouri state Sen. **Jane Cunningham**, a board member of Missouri Rising Action, said in a statement." [Full story.](#)

50 STATE LLC ADDS POULAND: **Jonathan Pouland** is joining **50 State LLC**, which describes itself as a bipartisan firm "that focuses on helping private-sector clients achieve results in the states," as vice president of local government affairs and business development. He'll be based in the firm's new Austin, Texas, office. He was previously vice president of government affairs and solutions for **Philips**.

POSSIBLE VENEZUELA OIL BAN SPLITS THE INDUSTRY: "The prospect of a U.S. blockade of crude oil imports from Venezuela has ignited fierce lobbying in Washington pitting domestic energy producers such as oil tycoon **Harold Hamm**, who favor a get-tough approach, against refiners that depend on those supplies," **Bloomberg News' Jennifer Dlouhy, Bill Allison** and **Meenal Vamburkar** report. Hamm, the chief executive of **Continental Resources** and the head of the **Domestic Energy Alliance**, in an interview "urged President **Donald Trump** to block the oil, a vital source of revenue for Venezuela. ... Opposing the ban are refiners such as **Chevron Corp., Phillips 66, and Valero Energy Corp.**, which have warned that choking off shipments of Venezuelan crude would starve refineries designed to process the country's heavy oil, leaving them searching for alternative supplies and driving up gasoline prices." [Full story.](#)

TRUMP HOTEL DRAINING THE SWAMP'S WALLET: "Donald Trump's company turned a \$1.97 million profit at its opulent Trump International Hotel so far in 2017, dramatically beating its expectations and giving the first hard numbers to critics who charge that Trump is profiting from his presidency," The **Washington Post's Jonathan O'Connell** reports. "The **Trump Organization** had projected that it would lose \$2.1 million during the first four months of 2017 as it established a new hotel and convention business in the nation's capital, according to newly released federal documents. Instead the hotel, with its namesake in the White House down the street, is already turning a hefty profit" and may be the most expensive hotel in the city, beating out luxury spots like the Hay-Adams and the Four Seasons.

- "Driving the profits are the extraordinary prices guests have been willing to pay for rooms, including members of Trump's Cabinet who have stayed or lived there, as well as big spending on food and beverages in the meeting areas, bar and restaurant - spots frequented by members of Trump's inner circle and other Republican leaders. This year, guests have paid an average of \$652.98 a night to stay there, beating the company's expectations by 57 percent, according to documents posted online recently by the General Services Administration." [Full story.](#)

IF YOU MISSED IT: "Paul Manafort is changing his attorneys as a federal investigation heats up into his financial transactions, according to people familiar with the matter," **POLITICO's Josh Dawsey** reports. "Manafort's case will now be handled by **Miller and Chevalier**, a boutique firm in Washington that specializes in complicated financial crimes among other issues, these people said. ... **Kevin Downing**, a former senior Department of Justice official known for his work representing clients and firms facing complex financial investigations, will be working on the case, one of these people familiar with the matter said." Manafort was previously represented by **Reg Brown of WilmerHale.** [Full story.](#)

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

None

NEW PACs:

AAV2 (PAC)

AdvanSix Inc. Political Action Committee (PAC)

Aptim Corp. Political Action Committee (aka Aptim PAC) (Lobbyist/Registrant PAC)

Missouri Rising Action (Super PAC)

New Democracy Fund (PAC)

Stand Firm America (PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Arctic Geopolitical Consulting: Kawerak Inc.

Arctic Geopolitical Consulting: Norton Sound Health Corporation

Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney Pc: New Jersey Resources Corporation

Carmen Group Incorporated: National Biodiesel Board

Encana Oil & Gas (USA) Inc.: Encana Oil & Gas (USA) Inc.

Fidelis Government Relations: Circinus, LLC
FifeStrategies, LLC: Hobart Hallaway & Quayle Ventures, LLC (on behalf of Techshot, Inc)
Holland & Knight, LLP: Ensyn Corporation
Holland & Knight, LLP: Louisville Regional Airport Authority
Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP: AKJ Industries, Inc.
Marks & Sokolov, LLC: Igor Kolomoisky
Massey, Watson & Hembree LLC: SAS Institute, Inc.
Prime Strategies: Metropolitan Museum of Art
Spark Therapeutics, Inc.: Spark Therapeutics, Inc.

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Fleet Street Group: North Central Montana Regional Water Authority
K&L Gates LLP: Viking River Cruises, Ltd.
Ms. Janet Kopenhaver T/A Eye on Washingt: American Wire Producers Association (AWPA)
[sic]

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-influence/2017/08/11/paxon-will-retire-from-akin-gump-221838>

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Dennis, Brady
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:10:42 PM
Subject: RE: Hey
[definers.jpg](#)

Sorry, just want to clarify. Attaching a screenshot from the online contract. It says that it was “not competed,” which seems to suggest no-bid. But you’re just saying that’s not the case?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:02 PM
To: Dennis, Brady <Brady.Dennis@washpost.com>
Subject: Hey

Your story says it was a no-bid contract. That is not accurate and we have this on-the-record statement regarding that “no-bid” language:

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Wed 11/15/2017 1:01:31 PM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle: TRUMP'S BACK, TIME TO TALK MOORE – Individual mandate repeal in Senate tax bill – HOUSE TO REQUIRE HARASSMENT TRAINING – Deliberations continue in Menendez trial

11/15/2017 07:59 AM EDT

By Heather Caygle (hcaygle@politico.com or [@heatherscope](https://twitter.com/heatherscope))

DEVELOPING OVERNIGHT: SENATE TAX PLAN - Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) rolled out the GOP's revised tax bill late last night and the proposal has some pretty significant changes, including a repeal of Obamacare's individual mandate. The bill would also sunset numerous individual tax cuts in 2025 while keeping lower corporate rates permanent - expect that to be a big talking point for Democrats - and double the child tax credit to \$2,000, a pet issue for Ivanka Trump and some Republicans. Brian Faler has more on the changes: <http://politi.co/2yG7tKO>

On the individual mandate repeal: Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), a member of GOP leadership, said the idea has the votes to pass on the Senate floor. But the numbers could create a headache for Republicans: The CBO said this week that repeal would lead to 13 million people losing their health insurance over the next decade. At the same time, several Republicans are pushing to pass the Alexander-Murray plan, a bill to stabilize Obamacare subsidies, "to make up for some of the negative effects on coverage" from repealing the mandate, Jen Haberkorn, Seung Min and Bernie Becker report. The Alexander-Murray proposal could end up in a must-pass year-end spending bill. More: <http://politi.co/2yHgi7j>

As Rich Rubin noted last night, committee Democrats weren't happy that they received the revised bill about the same time the rest of the world did, late at night and halfway into what's supposed to be a four-day markup. Today's fun starts at 10 a.m. Tune in: <http://bit.ly/2yIgDpW>

On the House side, lawmakers will vote on the rule governing floor debate for the House GOP tax bill today - a day earlier than originally planned - with a vote on final passage still set for tomorrow. But, as Roll Call's Lindsey McPherson notes, don't expect any changes to the bill now. "The House Republican tax bill cleared the Rules Committee late Tuesday night with no changes or amendments made in order for floor debate," she reports. "The panel adopted a closed rule in an 8-3 party-line vote, the last hurdle for the bill to clear before it reaches the floor." More: <http://bit.ly/2yG65YA>

TIME TO TALK MOORE - President Donald Trump is back from Asia, which means he'll have to address a hot topic he was mostly able to avoid while overseas: Roy Moore. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell reached out to Trump and top White House aides during the trip to urge the president to help push a defiant Moore out of the race, [Alex Isenstadt](#), [Eliana Johnson](#) and [Josh Dawsey](#) report. "In order for Trump to get involved, some aides to the president say, he would need an airtight plan that limits his political exposure to any fallout."

The RNC pulled out of a joint-fundraising pact with Moore on Tuesday, days after the Senate GOP's campaign arm did the same. And McConnell predicted Moore would face expulsion proceedings if elected during a Wall Street Journal event Tuesday. "If he were to be sworn in, he would immediately be in a process before the Senate Ethics Committee," McConnell said. The Kentucky leader also publicly floated the idea of Attorney General Jeff Sessions running as a write-in candidate for his old seat. "I'd like to save the seat, and it's a heck of a dilemma," McConnell said. "It's a very tough situation." Seung Min and Bres with more:
<http://politi.co/2yEDe75>

Video du jour: There's one Republican who *really* doesn't want to answer questions about Moore, Alabama Rep. Mo Brooks, who endorsed Moore in the primary. Here's this video of Brooks literally running away from an ABC reporter trying to ask about the allegations facing Moore: <http://bit.ly/2yGsDsc>

Meanwhile, Democratic leaders may not be flocking to Alabama to stump for candidate Doug Jones, but their money and organizing resources are quietly flowing to his campaign. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer "has told allies he believes the race is now clearly winnable for Mr. Jones, but that Democrats must take pains not to nationalize the contest in a way that might offend voters in a deeply conservative state." The New York Times' Alex Burns and Jonathan Martin: <http://nyti.ms/2yFCDSr>

WILD ABOUT WEDNESDAY. Welcome to Nov. 15, and thanks for reading Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill.

TUESDAY'S MOST CLICKED: The webcast of the House Judiciary Committee hearing with Attorney General Jeff Sessions was the winner.

NET NEUTRALITY 101: The long-running fight over net neutrality, which pits telecom giants against tech companies, is heating up at the Federal Communications Commission. To understand what the fight is all about and where it's headed, check out POLITICO's latest explainer video featuring Technology Reporter Margaret McGill and the artwork of Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist, Matt Wuerker. Click [HERE](#) to watch.

HOUSE TO MANDATE HARASSMENT TRAINING - The House will require lawmakers and staffers undergo anti-harassment training, Speaker Ryan said Tuesday. The announcement comes after a House Administration hearing on the issue where female lawmakers shared stories of male members of Congress who have engaged in sexual harassment without naming names. Still, several lawmakers say Congress must go further and overhaul the Capitol's burdensome policies for reporting a harassment complaint. Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) will hold a press conference on their proposal to overhaul current harassment reporting policies later today. Elana with more on the House changes:
<http://politi.co/2ALYxEY>

TWEET DU JOUR: [@RepPeteKing](#): From Sandy aid to tax reform [@MickMulvaneyOMB](#) tries to screw New York. Probably feels inferior because New York subsidizes his state of South Carolina.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) says he considers Twitter messages exchanged between Donald Trump Jr. and WikiLeaks "to be 'very innocuous,' and the exchanges don't make him any more likely to bring in the president's eldest son for a public hearing," CNN's Jeremy Herb and Manu Raju report. Democrats on the panel have been calling for a public hearing with the president's son but Grassley said that is still under discussion. The Atlantic's Julia Ioffe broke news Monday of the private Twitter correspondence between Trump Jr. and WikiLeaks.

'I DON'T RECALL' - Attorney General Jeff Sessions tried to distance himself from reports of contact between Trump campaign aides and Russia last year, telling the House Judiciary Committee Tuesday he has "never lied about his own role but simply had little recollection of discussions on the topic," Josh Gerstein and Kyle Cheney report. "Sessions grew indignant over Democrats' assertions that his explanations of his contacts with Russians and of his awareness of such communications by other campaign advisers had evolved over time, and he said any accusations he had misled Congress were 'a lie.'" More: <http://politi.co/2yFOOii>

DISPATCH FROM NEWARK - Jurors in the bribery trial against Sen. Bob Menendez resume deliberations today, two days after they told the judge they were deadlocked. "Jurors sent no notes and asked no questions during their 5 1/2 hours of deliberations on Tuesday, giving no clue as to whether they were any closer to reaching a verdict on the 12 counts against Menendez ... and the 11 counts against his co-defendant, Florida eye doctor Salomon Melgen," Matt Friedman reports. More: <http://politi.co/2yF3RIZ>

BUDGET DEAL? WHAT BUDGET DEAL? The current spending bill is set to run out Dec. 8 but House GOP leaders are in no rush to hammer out a deal with Democrats on a proposal to raise spending caps and fund the government through the rest of fiscal 2018. "House GOP leaders worry that forcing fiscal conservatives to vote to increase strict budget caps would spur a riot within their ranks," Sarah Ferris, Rachael and Jen Scholtes report for Pros. "So they're hoping passing tax reform first - a huge legislative accomplishment they could sell back home - will put the conference at ease and give them more flexibility to reach a budget deal with Democrats." Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said Congress will likely have to pass a stopgap spending bill first but doesn't want anything that goes into next year.

CHC DISPUTE GETS PERSONAL, *REAL PERSONAL* - A dispute over whether Rep. Carlos Curbelo, a Florida Republican, should be able to join the all-Democratic Congressional Hispanic Caucus turned oddly personal Tuesday night after a Curbelo aide accused one of the caucus members of putting his ear wax on her shoulder after a TV appearance. The aide said Rep. Ruben Gallego, who told the Washington Examiner he plans to vote against Curbelo joining the CHC, "rubbed his ear wax" on her cardigan after pulling his ear piece out. "That's disgusting. I do not tolerate any disrespect to my staff. Ms. Rodriguez deserves an apology. Let's start there," Curbelo tweeted. So far, no response from Gallego. The CHC could vote on Curbelo's bid to join as soon as tomorrow.

TODAY IN CONGRESS - **The House** meets at 10 a.m. to debate floor rules for the House GOP's tax bill with first votes at 1:30 p.m. and last votes at 3:30 p.m. Today's agenda:

<http://bit.ly/2AL4h1M>. **The Senate** meets at 9:30 a.m. with three roll call votes related to nominations at 12 p.m. More info: <http://bit.ly/2ANc3Zl>

AROUND THE HILL - Reps. Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.) and Adriano Espaillat (D-N.Y.) hold a press conference on their plan to introduce articles of impeachment against the president at 9 a.m. in HVC Studio A. **Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-Calif.) and other members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus** hold a press conference on the GOP's tax bill at 10 a.m. in the House triangle.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), former Rep. Gabby Giffords (D-Ariz.), Patricia Ryan, daughter of the late Rep. Leo J. Ryan (D-Calif.), Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) and Reps. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) and Frederica Wilson (D-Fla.) will hold a ceremony to name the House Democratic Cloakroom after Giffords and Ryan at 10:45 a.m. in the Rayburn Room (H-207).

Sens. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) hold a press conference on domestic violence at 11 a.m. in the Senate radio/TV gallery. **Reps. Judy Chu (D-Calif.), Mark Takano (D-Calif.) and other members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus** hold a press conference on the Dream Act at 11 a.m. in the House triangle.

Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) hold a press conference on Puerto Rico at 11:45 a.m. in the Senate radio/TV gallery. **Pelosi, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and several other Democrats** participate in a rally against the GOP tax bill at 12 p.m. on the east lawn of the Capitol.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) and Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) hold a press conference on sexual harassment training at 12 p.m. in HVC Studio A.

House Education ranking member Bobby Scott (D-Va.) and Reps. Susan Davis (D-Calif.) and Kathleen Rice (D-N.Y.) participate in a discussion on expanding apprenticeships at 2 p.m. in 2261 Rayburn. **Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.)** will take questions from reporters starting at 3 p.m. in 1100 Longworth after several House Republicans meet with DACA recipients.

TUESDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER - Logan Ferree was first to guess that Elbridge Gerry (of gerrymandering fame) lost his re-election bid for governor after a controversy over redistricting in his state and later served as the fifth vice president.

TODAY'S TRIVIA - Who was the last member the Senate attempted to expel and what was the outcome? The first person to answer correctly gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send your best guess my way: hcaygle@politico.com.

GET HUDDLE [emailed to your phone](#) each morning.

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/huddle/2017/11/15/trumps-back-time-to-talk-moore-individual-mandate-repeal-in-senate-tax-bill-house-to-require-harassment-training-223357>

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Fimrite, Peter
Sent: Wed 2/7/2018 8:53:52 PM
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

1. The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.
2. Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words "climate change" were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.
3. Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.
4. Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?
5. Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934

Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM

To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM

To: Press <Press@epa.gov>

Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: [@pfimrite](https://twitter.com/pfimrite)

To: Skolnik, Samuel[sskolnik@bgov.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 7:07:13 PM
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Skolnik, Samuel [mailto:sskolnik@bgov.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:42 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Hi Jahan –

I just sent the following email to press@epa.gov, but wanted to make sure I got some kind of response today. My questions are regarding Definers Corp.

Any help appreciated,

Sam

--

Hi all. I cover federal contracting and procurement issues for Bloomberg Government, and am working on a daily story based off of reports that EPA today has dropped the contract with Definers Corp. to help the EPA shape press coverage of the agency, through a no-bid contract.

Questions:

1 – Why did EPA drop the Definers contract?

2 – Why was this a sole-source solicitation in the first place?

3 – How did EPA decide to solicit the work from Definers Corp. specifically?

4 – What did EPA need to do to justify this as a sole-source solicitation? Did the agency do what it needed to, to abide the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other pertinent laws? What exactly was that?

5 – Does EPA believe there are inherent risks to agencies, and by extension taxpayers, in no-bid contracts? If so, what are they?

I'm looking for comment (or EPA's written thoughts, attributable to Jahan Wilcox or whoever the right person might be) by 4 p.m. today. My contact info is below.

Thank you,

Sam

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

Direct: (202) 416-3328

Cell: (702) 755-5729 *(On Fridays, please call my Cell)*

sskolnik@bgov.com

@samskolnik

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 6/27/2017 8:54:56 PM
Subject: RE: Definers

Thanks man! I am out on Friday but the rapid response clips are helpful and the interns doing a great job but we miss stuff late at night.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:53 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

I'm trying to get a time set up with him on Friday. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:52 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Where are we on setting up a call with Joe. I really don't need to do a call, I know the quality of their product. Last night a story about in the NYT and would've been nice to have someone at the helm to send that out as it happened.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sun 2/25/2018 4:33:04 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by PhRMA: TRUMP says we'll see a GUN CONTROL bill soon, and JAKE TAPPER grills the Broward County sheriff

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by PhRMA

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

Good Sunday morning. WHILE YOU WERE ENJOYING YOUR SATURDAY NIGHT, President Donald Trump called into Jeanine Pirro's Fox News show and said, "I think we're going to have a great bill put forward, very soon, having to do with background checks, having to do with getting rid of certain things, and keeping other things, and perhaps we'll do something on age." Trump said he told the NRA they need to get moving on some gun-related legislation.

-- **TRUMP** said the military parade is most likely going to be on Veterans Day, but said he's considering July 4, because Independence Day in D.C. "would be beautiful." He also said he would scrap the military parade if it can't be done at "a reasonable cost."

CONGRESS returns tomorrow. The House comes in Monday night and is out Tuesday.

AMAZING INTERVIEW -- CNN'S JAKE TAPPER speaks to **BROWARD SHERIFF SCOTT ISRAEL ... TAPPER:** "Are you really not taking any responsibility for the multiple red flags that were brought to the attention of the Broward Sheriff's office about this shooter before the incident, whether it was people near him, close to him, calling the police on him?" **ISRAEL:** "Jake, I can only take responsibility for what I knew about. I exercised my due diligence, I've given amazing leadership to this agency."

TAPPER: "Amazing leadership?" **ISRAEL:** "Yes, Jake, there's a lot of things we've done throughout. You don't measure a person's leadership by a deputy not going into ... these deputies received the training they needed."

TAPPER: "Maybe you measure somebody's leadership by whether or not they protect the community. In this case, you've listed 23 incidents before the shooting involving the shooter and still nothing was done to keep guns out of his hands, to make sure the school was protected, to make sure you are keeping an eye on him, your deputy at the

school failed, I don't understand how you can sit there and claim amazing leadership."

ISRAEL: "Jake, on 16 of those cases, our deputies did everything right. Our deputies have done amazing things. We've taken this, in the five years I've been sheriff, we've taken the Broward sheriff's office to a new level. I work with some of the bravest people I've ever met." *The rush transcript from CNN* <http://politi.co/2sW6GH0>

DEBUT -- MARGARET BRENNAN for the first time as official anchor of **CBS' "FACE THE NATION":** @FaceTheNation: ".@margbrennan: Should teachers be armed? @RepBrianMast: I think some teachers are the right candidates for this when they have the right training."

-- NRA'S DANA LOESCH on **ABC's "THIS WEEK"** with **GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS:** "I know that people are trying to find daylight between President Trump and five million law-abiding gun owners ... These are just things that he's discussing right now ... He's really looking for solutions."

ON THE BROWARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE: "This all stems from their dereliction of duty, and I know they say now it's 23 times that they had called in, in addition to two FBI tips and numerous reports from classmates ... I wish that as much attention were given to the Broward County Sheriff and their abdication of duty as trying to blame 5 million innocent law-abiding gun owners all across the country for this."

-- FLORIDA GOV. RICK SCOTT to **CHRIS WALLACE** on **"FOX NEWS SUNDAY":** "I'm going to work every day -- between now and the end of session on one purpose -- get this passed. Make sure we get the \$500 million funding. Make sure we have the law enforcement, the mental health issues -- make sure we're not -- people are not going to have access to a gun. I'm going to make sure parents feel confident in sending their child to school."

ON THE NRA: "I think most members in the NRA agree with me, this is logical. I'm sure there's going to be some that disagree. But I'm a dad. I'm a granddad and I'm a governor. I want my state to be safe. I want every child to be in a safe environment when they're trying to be educated. ... I'm not into banning, you know, specific weapons. I think what you need to do is ban specific people from having weapons. Focus on the problem. We've got to focus on solutions that work -- banning the people that are going to potentially cause the problems."

-- CHUCK TODD speaks with **SEN. PAT TOOMEY (R-PA.)** on **NBC'S "MEET THE PRESS":** **TODD:** "On the idea of raising the age on assault weapons from 18 to 21. Are you personally supportive of that?" **TOOMEY:** "Uh, I'm very skeptical about that. Because the vast majority of 18, 19, 20, 21 year olds are law abiding citizens who aren't a threat to anyone. So I'm skeptical about that. I- I- I'm willing to hear the other side on this, but I'm skeptical."

TODD: "What about the AR-15 specifically? I mean, is there an argument to be made

that something that powerful you know, you could make an exception for some hunting rifles, but something, something that powerful?" **TOOMEY:** "Here's the problem, Chuck. There's a lot of hunting rifles that are as powerful as an AR-15. The difference between the AR-15 and an awful lot of commonly sold rifles is just cosmetic. It's got a grip under the barrel and it's painted black. That is uh, that doesn't change its lethality."

SPEAKER PAUL RYAN on the shooting in Florida, via Wisconsin Public Radio: "'We've got to make sure when law enforcement gets all these tips, that doesn't happen again. We have to make sure that people who are mentally unstable -- and we just passed a recent law on this - don't have the ability to go do this,' Ryan said, adding that he thinks it's important that officials get to the bottom of what happened and fix what went wrong 'while preserving citizen rights.'" <http://bit.ly/2F0puKI>

TRUMP'S MONDAY -- PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP hosts governors at the White House tomorrow, and will have lunch with VP Mike Pence, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- RUN FOR SOMETHING has placed a full-page ad in the Sun Sentinel -- the main newspaper in Broward County -- to encourage young people to run against the 25 unopposed Florida state legislators who are backed by the NRA. The ad says: "THE NRA IS KILLING OUR KIDS. These 25 state legislators are running unopposed this November -- and they're complicit in the gun violence in our community. Hold them accountable. Run against them. We will help you."

Since the group launched during Trump's inauguration, they say they've recruited more than 16,000 young people to run for office and have endorsed 232. Forty-eight percent are people of color and 42% are women. The group, founded by Amanda Litman and Ross Morales Rocketto, says this ad is their first in a series of ad buys. **The ad** <http://politi.co/2ouT3Jy>

WORTH WATCHING -- MATT SCHLAPP goes on **MICHAEL STEELE'S** radio show after CPAC spokesman Ian Walters said the RNC made him chairman because he was black. <http://bit.ly/2CiYqFc>

***** **A message from PhRMA: New report from Express Scripts shows** spending on medicines grew just 1.5 percent in 2017, which is the smallest increase since the company began tracking spending 25 years ago. <http://politi.co/2xyzEif> *****

DEPT. OF DIPLOMACY -- "After testy call with Trump over border wall, Mexican president shelves plan to visit White House," by WaPo's Phil Rucker, Joshua Partlow and Nick Miroff: "Tentative plans for Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto to make his first visit to the White House to meet with President Trump were scuttled this week after a testy call between the two leaders ended in an impasse over Trump's promised border wall, according to U.S. and Mexican officials. Peña Nieto was eyeing an official trip to Washington this month or in March, but both countries agreed to call off the plan after Trump would not agree to publicly affirm Mexico's position that it would not

fund construction of a border wall that the Mexican people widely consider offensive, said the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a confidential conversation.

"Speaking by phone on Tuesday, Peña Nieto and Trump devoted a considerable portion of their roughly 50 minute conversation to the wall, and neither man would compromise his position. One Mexican official said Trump 'lost his temper.' But U.S. officials described him instead as being frustrated and exasperated, saying Trump believed it was unreasonable for Peña Nieto to expect him to back off his crowd-pleasing campaign promise of forcing Mexico to pay for the wall."

<http://wapo.st/2F0TSEI>

KYLE CHENEY -- "Democratic memo: FBI was investigating Trump campaign associates weeks before receiving dossier": "The FBI team investigating the 2016 Trump campaign's contacts with Russians had already opened inquiries into multiple people connected to the campaign when it received a controversial dossier alleging illicit ties between then-candidate Trump and the Kremlin, a Democratic memo released by the House Intelligence Committee revealed Saturday.

"The dossier, compiled by former British spy Christopher Steele, wasn't provided to the FBI's counterintelligence team until mid-September 2016, according to the memo. By then, the counterintelligence investigation into Trump's campaign was seven weeks old. 'The FBI had already opened sub-inquiries into ... individuals linked to the Trump campaign,' according to the findings of the committee's nine Democrats."

<http://politi.co/2HLMUpV> ... **The full memo** <http://politi.co/2sTEAfx>

-- KEY SENTENCE: "[I]t opens a new partisan front in a battle that has consumed the House Intelligence Committee and has all but derailed its efforts to probe Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election."

DCCC PASSES ON AN INCUMBENT!? -- "Anti-abortion Democrat snubbed by party for reelection," by Heather Caygle: "Dan Lipinski is the kind of candidate Democrats need more of for the party to win the House in November. But the national Democratic party is refusing to endorse him. The seven-term congressman from Chicago, who opposes abortion and voted against Obamacare, marriage equality and immigration reform, is one of the most conservative members of the House Democratic Caucus.

"The question of whether the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee will officially back Lipinski for reelection -- he faces a stiff primary challenge from the left -- has triggered an outbreak of ill will and finger-pointing from each wing of the party toward the other. With less than a month until the March 20 primary, tensions that have been brewing privately for weeks between the caucus' centrist and progressive lawmakers are now spilling out into a messy public spat.

"Caught in the middle are House Democratic leaders, who govern a caucus more

aligned with Lipinski's opponent, Marie Newman. But they are wary of appearing to kick one of their incumbents to the curb, aware of the potential long-term implications for party that is struggling to regain its standing with blue-collar voters. 'I don't think what the DCCC does or says means a lot for my race as much as sending a signal to other Democrats who are looking to run,' Lipinski said in an interview."

<http://politi.co/2ERaaQG>

-- AND THEN THERE'S THIS: "California Democrats decline to endorse Feinstein," by California Playbookers David Siders and Carla Marinucci in San Diego: "In a sharp rebuke of Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the California Democratic Party has declined to endorse the state's own senior senator in her bid for reelection. Riven by conflict between progressive and more moderate forces at the state party's annual convention here, delegates favored Feinstein's progressive rival, state Senate leader Kevin de León, over Feinstein by a 54 percent to 37 percent margin, according to results announced Sunday.

"Neither candidate reached the 60 percent threshold required to receive the party endorsement for 2018. But the snubbing of Feinstein led de León to claim a victory for his struggling campaign." <http://politi.co/2EQpcX2>

IN THE COURTS -- "Supreme Court could cripple public unions in run-up to 2018 midterms," by Andrew Hanna and Caitlin Emma: "The Supreme Court will hear arguments Monday in a case that could shrink government unions and their campaign war chests by as much as two thirds, with potentially devastating consequences for the Democratic Party in a competitive election cycle.

"The case, Janus v. AFSCME, challenges the money that public unions representing teachers, firefighters, nurses and other government employees collect from non-members to cover their share of collective bargaining costs. Democratic candidates and causes rely on these unions for more than \$100 million in contributions every election cycle, and for armies of workers dispatched to staff phone banks and canvass neighborhoods across the country." <http://politi.co/2CHgg0k>

THE MUELLER REPORT ...

-- WSJ'S PETER NICHOLAS: "White House Legal Team Considers Ways Trump Could Testify Before Mueller: Possible options include written answers to special counsel's questions or limited verbal testimony by president": "President Donald Trump's lawyers are considering ways for him to testify before special counsel Robert Mueller, provided the questions he faces are limited in scope and don't test his recollections in ways that amount to a potential perjury trap, a person familiar with his legal team's thinking said.

"Mr. Trump's legal team is weighing options that include providing written answers to Mr. Mueller's questions and having the president give limited verbal testimony, another person familiar with the matter said." <http://on.wsj.com/2GHMhrs>

-- PETER BAKER in the NYT, "Mueller Is Gaining Steam. Should Trump Worry?":

"With each passing day, Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel investigating Russia's interference in the 2016 election, seems to add another brick to the case he is building - one more indictment, one more interview, one more guilty plea. Mr. Trump and his advisers insist they are not worried because so far none of the charges implicate the president. Yet no one outside Mr. Mueller's office knows for sure where he is heading and the flurry of recent action seems to be inexorably leading to a larger target.

"When you put that all together, the White House should be extremely worried," said Benjamin Wittes, editor in chief of Lawfare ... and a friend of James B. Comey, the former F.B.I. director who was leading the Russia investigation until being fired by Mr. Trump last year. 'You have to ask the question about whether there is a certain measure of self-delusion going on here.'" <http://nyti.ms/2CkoxLW>

-- "How Skadden, the Giant Law Firm, Got Entangled in the Mueller Investigation,"

by NYT's Ken Vogel and Matt Goldstein: "The interest of the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, in Skadden appears to go beyond [Alex] van der Zwaan. Mr. Mueller's team has requested and received documents from Skadden related to its Ukraine work, according to two lawyers familiar with the investigation. The special counsel has investigated \$4 million in secret payments that Mr. Manafort and Mr. Gates are accused of funneling to Skadden and other firms from accounts in Cyprus, and could get more information on Skadden from Mr. Gates, who worked closely with the firm.

"Lawyers at Skadden are on edge, according to people who have worked with the firm. Mr. Mueller's inquiry threatens the delicate balance that Skadden has struck between lucrative sources of revenue. The firm has made huge profits from corporate work for image-conscious United States companies, while also representing riskier international clients, such as Russian oligarchs and companies with close ties to President Vladimir V. Putin and former Soviet states." <http://nyti.ms/2F0pFoZ>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "North Korean envoy, in South, opens door to U.S.

talks," by AP's Hyung-Jin Kim and Kim Tong-Hyung in Pyeongchang: "A North Korean envoy making a rare visit to South Korea said Sunday that his country was willing to open talks with the United States, a rare step toward diplomacy between enemies after a year of North Korean missile and nuclear tests and direct threats of war from both Pyongyang and Washington. Kim Yong Chol, who Seoul believes masterminded two attacks in 2010 that killed 50 South Koreans, was in South Korea for the end of the Olympics. He said North Korean leader Kim Jong Un wanted to improve ties with Washington and had 'ample intentions of holding talks' with its rival, according to the South's presidential office." <http://bit.ly/2EShEio>

THE JUICE ...

-- AMERICA FIRST ACTION, a super PAC linked to President Trump, dropped \$200,000 with Brad Parscale's firm to do digital advertising opposing Conor Lamb.

TRUMP'S SUNDAY -- The president and the First Lady will host the Governors' Ball this evening.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) speaks at the 2018 California Democrats State Convention on Feb. 24. Despite being a sitting senator, the party did not endorse Feinstein. | Denis Poroy/AP Photo

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "At U.S. Urging, Pakistan to Be Placed on Terrorism-Financing List," by NYT's Salman Masood: "At the urging of the Trump administration, an international task force has decided to place Pakistan on a terrorism-financing watch list, a decision that has stunned and alarmed Pakistani officials and one that could deliver a major blow to the nation's economy. The Paris-based organization, the Financial Action Task Force, which conducts much of its business in secret, concluded its meetings on Friday with no public statement on Pakistan's status. But Miftah Ismail, a financial adviser to Pakistan's prime minister, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, said he expected Pakistan to be placed on the list in June, after the country and the task force agreed on an action plan." <http://nyti.ms/2owYpny>

THE IVANKA TRAVEL BEAT -- "Ivanka Trump: Visit to Olympics 'so incredibly inspiring,'" by AP's Errin Haines Whack in Pyeongchang: "Trump spent part of Sunday morning watching the U.S. team compete in the bobsled competition and meeting with athletes, including Team USA bobsled silver medalist Lauren Gibbs - who offered Trump a taste of Olympic glory by letting the first daughter try on her hardware. 'I feel like this almost is like trying on someone's wedding band,' Trump said. 'Am I allowed?' Gibbs placed the medal around Trump's neck. She raised the medal with one hand and draped her other around Gibbs' while posing for a photo, saying, 'That is so cool!'" <http://bit.ly/2Fu3NQu>

-- **@NateWeberActual** (2018 Olympian and member of the USA Bobsled National Team): "Regardless of your politics you have to admit that it's pretty cool when @IvankaTrump invites your kids to watch the #Olympics with her. It was an amazing experience for them. #teamusa". <http://bit.ly/2GJtyLY>

2020 WATCH ...

-- **POST AND COURIER: "As 2020 Democratic primary warms up, L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti stakes early claim to South Carolina,"** by Jamie Lovegrove: "Eric Garcetti insists he's plenty busy just being mayor of Los Angeles right now.

"But as he traversed early presidential primary state South Carolina this week, the 47-year-old California native was already testing a national-oriented stump speech.

"He stopped by a Waffle House in Mauldin. He autographed baseballs. He roused a diverse crowd in the Democratic stronghold of lower Richland County. He toured an automotive research center at Clemson University wearing a tiger paw lapel pin. He raised more than \$30,000 for local Democrats and met with many of the state party's most influential movers and shakers. ...

"I wish I could say that Mayor Garcetti was here because of me," joked U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-Columbia, at a Wednesday unveiling for a statue of the first black professor at the University of South Carolina. 'But I think he has other things on his mind.'" <http://bit.ly/2opVoq6>

-- NYT'S SHANE GOLDMACHER, BRIAN ROSENTHAL and AGUSTIN

ARMENDARIZ: "In Spite of Executive Order, Cuomo Takes Campaign Money From State Appointees": "In late November, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo flew to Buffalo for a fund-raising trip, a quick two-stop jaunt that brought in more than \$200,000 in donations for his re-election campaign. The events, one at an Embassy Suites hotel and the other a more intimate gathering at a private residence, were hosted by two men familiar to Mr. Cuomo -- and to state government.

"One host, Steven J. Weiss, had been appointed by Mr. Cuomo to the New York State Housing Finance Agency in 2011 and the state board of the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in 2016. Government records show that Mr. Weiss has donated \$53,000 to the governor's campaign since being picked for the housing agency.

"The other, Kenneth A. Manning, had been named by Mr. Cuomo to the same cancer research institute board in 2015, as well as another public authority. Records show that Mr. Manning has donated \$50,500 since his appointments." <http://nyti.ms/2BQvWSb>

******* A message from PhRMA:** Middlemen, like PBMs and insurers, have been shifting more of the costs of your health care to you for years - **with deductibles increasing 300% since 2006.** <http://politi.co/2xyzEif> *****

TRUMP INC. - "Police, yelling, power turned off: Confrontation over Trump's Panama hotel escalates," by Ana Cerrud, David Fahrenthold and Jonathan O'Connell in WaPo: "The majority owner of President Trump's only hotel in Latin America abruptly ordered Trump employees out of the property on Thursday, triggering a confrontation in which Trump employees refused to leave and asked police to intervene, according to the Trump Organization and local news reports. This attempt at a takeover by Orestes Fintiklis - a Cypriot businessman based in Miami - marked a sharp escalation in his months-old effort to re-brand the Trump International Hotel Panama and replace the Trump Organization as its manager. Fintiklis blames Trump's brand and Trump's company for declining revenue and empty rooms.

"So far, his tactics had been confined to lawsuits and angry letters . That changed on Thursday, when Fintiklis and a group of others arrived at the hotel, seeking to deliver letters of termination to the staff. That caused at least one confrontation, which included yelling but no physical altercation, according to a Trump Organization official. The police came, the Trump Organization official said, but did not allow Fintiklis to eject the staff. At one point, the hotel's power was turned off, apparently by an ally of Fintiklis. ... The power has been restored." <http://wapo.st/2EShEPq>

BONUS GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

-- **"The Poison We Pick,"** by Andrew Sullivan in NY Mag: "No other developed country is as devoted to the poppy as America. We consume 99 percent of the world's hydrocodone and 81 percent of its oxycodone. We use an estimated 30 times more opioids than is medically necessary for a population our size. And this love affair has been with us from the start. The drug was ubiquitous among both the British and American forces in the War of Independence as an indispensable medicine for the pain of battlefield injuries." <http://nym.ag/2CgcTI7>

-- **"The Case Against Google,"** by Charles Duhigg on the cover of today's N.Y. Times Magazine: "Critics say the search giant is squelching competition before it begins. Should the government step in?" <http://nyti.ms/2ox851l> ... **The cover**
<http://bit.ly/2oq3DST>

-- **"Hawai'i's Last Outlaw Hippies,"** by Brendan Borrell in Hakai Magazine: "After half a century, the counterculture squatters of Kalalau Valley are facing a final eviction." <http://bit.ly/2F3G4Jg> (h/t Longform.org)

-- **"John Shuster and the U.S. Curling Team Win First Gold Medal,"** by NYT's Scott Cacciola: "He found three curlers who still believed in him: George, a liquor salesman who competes in 8-year-old sneakers with holes in them; Hamilton, a sweeping wizard renowned for his mustache; and Landsteiner, an engineer. The team became known in curling circles as Team Reject, a moniker it came to embrace." <http://nyti.ms/2F2qBJi> (h/t Doug Heye)

-- **"The Half of the World That Doesn't Make Out,"** by William Jankowiak, Shelly Volsche, and Justin R. Garcia on Sapiens.org: "We looked at 168 cultures and found couples kissing in only 46 percent of them. Societies with distinct social classes are usually kissers; societies with fewer or no social classes, like hunter-gatherer communities, are usually not. For some, kissing seems unpleasant, unclean, or just plain weird. Kissing is clearly a culturally variable display of affection." <http://bit.ly/2ouAfKF>

-- **"Americans Will Struggle to Grow Old at Home,"** by E. Tammy Kim in Bloomberg: "Some 80 million people will be seniors by 2050. Our national home-care infrastructure isn't close to ready." <https://bloom.bg/2ovjbUD>

-- **"American Manufacturing Doesn't Have to Die,"** by Meredith Haggerty in Racked: "But will businesses make the choice to try and save it?" <http://bit.ly/2HH45Ed>

-- **"Mohsin Hamid on the rise of nationalism: 'In the land of the pure, no one is pure enough'"** -- The Guardian: "In the land of the pure, no one is pure enough. No one can ever be sufficiently pure to be lastingly safe. No Muslim is Muslim enough. And so all are suspect. All are at risk. And many are killed by others who find their purity lacking, and many of their killers are in turn killed for the same reason. And on and on, in a chain reaction. The politics of purity is the politics of fission." <http://bit.ly/2sLQdp6>

-- **"The Great Online School Scam,"** by Noliwe Rooks in Longreads in an excerpt of "Cutting School: Privatization, Segregation, and the End of Public Education": "Students are performing worse than ever, but private companies are making millions." <http://bit.ly/2GHPaZp> ... **\$17.67 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2ooDMe3>

-- **"Abraham Lincoln's Secret Visits to Slaves,"** by William R. Black in the Atlantic: "In the mid-1930s, the Federal Writers' Project interviewed thousands of former slaves, some of whom claimed the president came to their plantations disguised as a beggar or a peddler, telling them they'd soon be free." <http://theatlantic.com/2CCS1cJ>

-- **"Tulip mania: the classic story of a Dutch financial bubble is mostly wrong,"** by Anne Goldgar in The Conversation -- per TheBrowser.com's description: "Debunking of myths about tulip mania in 17C Holland, most of them spread by 19C historian Charles Mackay. The market in tulip bulbs was small, and consisted mainly of merchants who could well afford such indulgences. Very few bulbs - a few dozen at most - sold for the price of houses. Trading was never frenzied, and often among friends. There is no evidence that the collapse of prices in 1637 caused any bankruptcies or suicides. The Dutch economy was completely unaffected." <http://bit.ly/2onw3wJ>

-- **"The Daring Plan to Save a Religious Minority from ISIS,"** by Jenna Krajeski in The New Yorker: "When the terrorist group attacked the Yazidis, a small group of American immigrants knew they could do something." <http://bit.ly/2oaBzmp>

-- **"Hunter S. Thompson, The Art of Journalism"** -- Interviewed by Douglas Brinkley and Terry McDonell in the Fall 2000 Paris Review: <http://bit.ly/2BQfWiK>

-- **"The polite extremist: Jacob Rees-Mogg's seemingly unstoppable rise,"** by Martin Fletcher in the New Statesman: "A Brexit ultra and profound reactionary, the eccentric MP is a strong contender to be the next prime minister. How dangerous is he?" <http://bit.ly/2EQffF8>

MEDIAWATCH - "Hoax attempts against Miami Herald augur brewing war over fake, real news," by McClatchy's Tim Johnson: "Two incidents hit The Miami Herald in recent days that underscore new tactics by those seeking to discredit mainstream media, and they augur what experts said are dark days in the battle between credible

news and misinformation. Both incidents came in the wake of the shooting in Parkland, Florida ... In the first incident, a perpetrator used a software tool to create two fake tweets that looked like they came from the account of Alex Harris, a Herald reporter preparing tributes to the slain students. One fake tweet asked for photos of dead bodies at the school and another asked if the shooter was white. The reporter almost immediately began getting angry messages." <http://bit.ly/2sTXGSY>-

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Mick Mulvaney brunching this morning at a window table at B Too on 14th Street near Logan Circle ... Terry McAuliffe and his wife at a table with several people last night at Dubliner.

OUT AND ABOUT - Pool report: "Maryland Governor Larry Hogan (R) and Montana Governor Steve Bullock (D) teamed up to co-host the National Governors Association's 'Purple Party' at the Park at Fourteenth last night. Democratic and Republican governors and their staff sipped 'Purple-tician' cocktails and noshed on purple mini cupcakes at the bipartisan affair."

SPOTTED: Govs. Larry Hogan, Steve Bullock, Scott Walker, Doug Ducey, and Phil Scott, Matt Clark, Jim Barnett, Tiffany Waddell, Allison Meyers, Lenny and Amelia Alcivar, Mark Holman, Doug Mayer, Keiffer Mitchell, Ashley O'Connor and Ted Kaczmarek, Matt Hirsch, Ellington and Shareese Churchill, Jim Bognet.

-- **SPOTTED** at Ashley and Ben Chang's annual Chinese New Year party at the Gibson: Larry La of Meiwah, Molly Ball and David Kihara, Brad and Anna Klapper, Mike and Margret Hammer, Jay Newton-Small, Mieke Eoyang, Evelyn Farkas, Maggie Feldman-Piltch, Alexandra Bell, Graham Brookie, Josh and Kara Cartin, Evan Medeiros and Bernadette Meehan, Irene Castagnoli, Colin and Rebecca Kahl, Steve Clemons and Andy Oros, Tom Forrest, Dany Pletka and Olivia Rademaker, Andrew Albertson, Shaila Manyam, Nancy Payne and Ben Goodkind.

WEEKEND WEDDING - "Lindsay Mendoza, Patrick Temple-West" - N.Y. Times: "The bride, 37, was until December, working in Washington as the global vice president of sustainability at AstraZeneca, the pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical company based in Cambridge, Mass. She graduated from McGill University and received a master's degree in social policy and development from the London School of Economics. ... The groom, 33, is a journalist in Washington for Politico. He graduated from St. Joseph's University and received a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University. ... The couple met during the Christmas season in 2013 while volunteering to wrap gifts for the needy in the basement at St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2ERLVhq>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Mona Charen, syndicated columnist, EPPC senior fellow

and author of the forthcoming "Sex Matters: How Modern Feminism Lost Touch with Science, Love, and Common Sense". Her fiery appearance yesterday at CPAC, in which she criticized President Trump for his treatment of women and then had to be escorted by a three-man security detail after her panel, was featured in a Tim Alberta Politico Magazine piece (<http://politi.co/2GGJclg>).

-- A trend she thinks deserve more attention: "Not so much a trend as a neglected angle on our national agony of mass shootings. There is something that we can do to address this scourge without transcending our divisions on guns - deny to mass shooters the fame/notoriety they crave. The press, especially TV, need only exercise a little discipline. Decline to show the face or say the name of the killer. We can't be sure that this would help, but it costs nothing to try and should unite liberals and conservatives. Our intuition as well as the words of many of the murderers, suggests that the sick longing for attention is a big motivator for these atrocities." **Read her Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2oyA3K7>

BIRTHDAYS: CNN's Hadas Gold (hat tip: Oliver Darcy) ... Bob Schieffer is 81 ... Keith Smythe Meacham ... Andy Rosenthal is 61 ... Andrew Burk, director of digital marketing at the U.S. Chamber, is 31 (h/t Blair Latoff Holmes) ... Barbara Levin, VP of comms. at CNN (h/t Matt Dornic) ... Lauren Kapp, president of Prospect Media Group and a HuffPost and NBC alum ... Jessica Yellin ... Anne Kornblut, director of strategic comms. for Facebook (h/t Tucker Bounds) ... Tom Nides, former Deputy Secretary of State under Hillary Clinton now managing director and vice chairman of Morgan Stanley (h/ts Steve Elmendorf and Ben Chang) ... Burlington (Vt.) Mayor Miro Weinberger ... Dan Riordan, president of global political risk and trade credit at XL Catlin (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Politico's Matt Dixon ... Jeremy Tunis is 4-0 ... former Pennsylvania first lady Michelle Ridge, wife of Tom Ridge (h/t Ed Cash) ... Tyler Houlton, acting press secretary at DHS (h/ts Alex Schriver, Lauren Claffey, Blain Rethmeier and Mac Zimmerman) ... Steve Gutow, former CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs ... Gabi Ashkenazi, former chief of the General Staff of the Israel Defense Forces, is 64 ... Brian Davis ...

... **Tim Berry**, head of global government relations at JPMorgan Chase, is 5-0! (h/t his bride Lisa Barclay) ... Ralph Fertig ... Mini Timmaraju ... Hollis Gurley ... Greg Crist, EVP of public affairs at Advamed (h/t Ken Spain) ... Jack Burns (h/t dad Mike) ... FINRA's Eric Wall, a Coons alum (h/t Sophie White) ... Anna Albert ... Rep. Darren Soto (D-Fla.) is 4-0 ... former Rep. Jim Gerlach (R-Pa.) is 63 ... Bridgett Frey, comms director for Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) ... Paul Nash ... David White ... Rep. Bill Flores (R-Texas) is 64 ... Arnold Garcia ... Bayanne Surdashi ... Edelman's Diego Hofman ... Bob Healy ... Trey Graham ... OFA alum Laurin Manning ... Charles Faulkner is 43 ... Stuart Wagner ... Gloria Torres ... Julie Goldman ... Harrison Clark ... George M. Urban ... Jim Mulhall ... Christina Sanchez ... Genevieve Craggs ... Sarah Aburdene ... Jack Dew ... Xholina Nano ... Chelsea Handler is 43 (h/t AP)

***** **A message from PhRMA:** While spending on medicines grew just 1.5 percent in 2017, unfortunately it doesn't feel that way for patients. More than one-third of a medicine's list price is often rebated back to middlemen, like insurers and pharmacy

benefit managers (PBMs). These discounts and rebates create savings of more than \$100 billion, but insurers don't always share these savings with patients. **Patients share the costs. They should share the savings.** <http://politi.co/2xyzEif> *****

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From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Tue 10/3/2017 5:31:18 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by Koch Industries: TRUMP lands in PUERTO RICO -- MATTIS says remaining in IRAN DEAL is national security interest -- ALEXIS MADRIGAL on how Google and Facebook failed in Vegas -- MATT RHOADES welcomes new daughter

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by Koch Industries

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)) and ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

BREAKING... -- "Hedge fund billionaire flew top Mnuchin aide on private jet to Palm Beach," by WaPo's Damian Paletta and Tom Hamburger: "Eli Miller, Mnuchin's chief of staff, flew with Nelson Peltz, a founding partner of New York-based Trian Fund Management on the trip. Peltz is an activist shareholder who has sought a board seat at Procter & Gamble, seeking to shake up management. He has spoken glowingly about Trump's proposal to slash tax rates on businesses and the wealthy, which is something designed in large part by senior Treasury officials. A Treasury Department spokesman confirmed the trip but denied there were any ethical issues." <http://wapo.st/2yH5q95>

NEWS ON LAS VEGAS -- "Las Vegas Shooter Wired \$100,000 to Philippines Last Week," by NBC News' Tom Winter, Jonathan Dienst, Pete Williams and Andrew Blankstein: "Las Vegas shooter Stephen Paddock wired \$100,000 to an account in his live-in girlfriend's home country of the Philippines in the week before he killed at least 59 people in the worst mass shooting in U.S. history, according to multiple senior law enforcement officials. Marilou Danley, 62, traveled to Hong Kong on Sept. 25 and was in the Philippines on Oct. 1, when Paddock began his rampage, say officials, but it's not known whether the money was intended for her, her family or another purpose." <http://nbcnews.to/2yG5Z2K>

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP is wheels down in Puerto Rico. He quickly made news.

-- ON THE PUERTO RICO RESPONSE: "The whole team has been amazing. Your governor, has been -- who I didn't know and heard very good things about him. He is not even from my party and he started right at the beginning appreciating what we did. ... Right from the beginning this governor did not play politics. ...

"I also want to thank your congresswoman. ... Congresswoman Jenniffer González Colón, who I have watched the other day and she was saying such nice things about all of the people that worked so hard. Jennifer, do you think you can say a little bit about what you said about us today? It's not about me, it is about the incredible people from the military to FEMA to first responders."

-- **TRUMP, COMPARING THE DEATH TOLL TO KATRINA:** "Every death is a horror, but if you look at a real catastrophe like Katrina and you look at the tremendous hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people that died and you look at what at what happened here with really a storm that was just totally overpowering ... 16 versus literally thousands of people. You can be very proud. Everyone around this table and everyone watching can really be very proud of what's taking place in Puerto Rico."

-- **@KatyTurNBC:** "'I hate to tell you Puerto Rico but you've thrown our budget out of whack' - Trump" **Video** <http://bit.ly/2hKZo3O>

DETAIL FROM AP: "On Monday, the nonprofit relief group Oxfam announced that it would be taking the rare step of intervening in an American disaster, citing its outrage over what it called a 'slow and inadequate response.'" <http://bit.ly/2ymQ7Gf>

-- **TRUMP AND CRUZ** met each other today in San Juan at a briefing.

BIG -- "Mattis: Stick to Iran deal," by Wesley Morgan: "President Donald Trump's top Pentagon advisers told Congress Tuesday they believe Iran is sticking to the 2015 agreement to halt its nuclear weapons program and expressed support for keeping the pact. 'At this point in time, absent indications to the contrary, it is something the president should consider staying in,' Defense Secretary Jim Mattis testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee. ...

"But appearing alongside Mattis, Marine Gen. Joe Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also told the panel Iran 'is not in material breach' of the agreement, contending that the pact has 'delayed the development of a nuclear capability by Iran.' Asked about Trump's criticism of the deal, Mattis also offered that 'I support the rigorous review that he has got going on right now.' But when pressed by Sen. Angus King (I-Maine) on whether he thinks remaining in the pact is in the U.S. national security interest, he replied 'Yes, senator, I do.'" <http://politi.co/2yFE5nn>

Happy Tuesday afternoon. ON LAS VEGAS ...

-- **PRESIDENT TRUMP** this morning, per NYT's Mark Landler, today's pooler: "Look, we have a tragedy. What happened is, in many ways, a miracle. The police department, they've done such an incredible job. And we'll be talking about gun laws as time goes on."

-- **On GUN SILENCER** legislation: "We'll talk about that later."

-- **PAUL RYAN on the Las Vegas shooting:** "We cannot let the actions of a single person define us as a country. It is not who we are. Instead what truly defines us are the act of heroism we witness after the tragedy." When asked how Congress can reduce gun violence, he cited mental health legislation Congress passed last year.

-- He also said that the **Sportsmen's bill**, which would in-part make it easier for people to buy suppressors, was "not scheduled now. I don't know when it is going to be scheduled." He said Congress is focused on the budget. House Majority Whip Steve Scalise was also at the press conference, but didn't speak about his position on gun policy.

BLOOMBERG'S SAHIL KAPUR -- "GOP Leaders Consider Changing State and Local Tax Deduction Instead of Ending It": "Republican leaders are considering putting limits on the \$1.3 trillion state and local tax deduction -- instead of eliminating it -- in order to secure votes from members in the hardest-hit states. House Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady discussed options at a dinner Monday night with several GOP members who have defended the break. They talked about measures including capping the deduction for top earners, and allowing individuals to choose between deducting mortgage interest or property taxes -- but not both -- when calculating their taxes, according to several dinner attendees." <https://bloom.bg/2kkZ8JB>

***** **A message from Koch Industries:** Facing challenges can be intimidating. But at Koch, it's how we work. From creating renewable fuels to designing innovations that make vehicles more aerodynamic and energy-efficient, we challenge the status quo. Our more than 70,000 U.S. employees help reduce waste, and make everyday products better. See for yourself at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

TOP-ED -- BUSH ALUMNI -- TEVI TROY in WSJ, "In Hurricane Relief, 2 out of 3 Ain't Good: When it comes to natural disasters, a president is remembered for faltering, not for succeeding." <http://on.wsj.com/2ylRzsF>

VALLEY TALK -- THE ATLANTIC'S ALEXIS MADRIGAL -- "Google and Facebook Failed Us": "In the crucial early hours after the Las Vegas mass shooting, it happened again: Hoaxes, completely unverified rumors, failed witch hunts, and blatant falsehoods spread across the internet. But they did not do so by themselves: They used the infrastructure that Google and Facebook and YouTube have built to achieve wide distribution. These companies are the most powerful information gatekeepers that the world has ever known, and yet they refuse to take responsibility for their active role in damaging the quality of information reaching the public. ...

"As news consumers, we can say this: It does not have to be like this. Imagine a newspaper posting unverified rumors about a shooter from a bunch of readers who had been known to perpetuate hoaxes. There would be hell to pay -- and for good reason. The standards of journalism are a set of tools for helping to make sense of chaotic situations, in which bad and good information about an event coexist. These technology companies need to borrow our tools -- and hire the people to execute on the principles -- or stop saying that they care about the quality of information that they deliver to people." <http://theatlantic.com/2xbFO81>

-- **"Who is Alex Stamos, the man hunting down Russian political ads on Facebook?,"** by Recode's Kurt Wagner: "CEO Mark Zuckerberg has publicly defended

Facebook, and showed remorse for his dismissive comments made last year about the likelihood that fake news influenced people on the social network. But behind the scenes, Stamos is doing a lot of the dirty work. The 38-year-old security expert and his team are leading the company's internal investigation into Russian meddling, according to sources, which includes searching for Facebook posts and political ads tied to Russia or other foreign parties trying to sway the election. Despite Facebook's disclosures thus far, that investigation is still ongoing, which puts Stamos in charge of one of the most important jobs inside Facebook." <http://bit.ly/2xccBJL>

ATTENTION CHUCK AND NANCY -- "GOP lawmakers say Trump wants tough measures in Dreamers deal," by Seung Min Kim and Burgess Everett: "Influential GOP lawmakers say Trump laid out a much more expansive and rigid set of demands Trump wants from Congress in any agreement to turn the expiring Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program into law. One new requirement, according to one senator who attended: Congress needs to pass a bill that addresses solely the current population of DACA recipients, rather than a broader circle of young undocumented immigrants.

"The president was very clear. Any effort to codify DACA needs to, one, be limited to DACA so the first criteria under the law should be you have a DACA permit today,' Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) said in an interview Tuesday. 'Second, any deal has to end chain migration. And then third, it ought to include some kind of enhanced measures, whether it's on the border or interior enforcement or what have you.'" <http://politi.co/2yGqEnr>

EVEN SCARAMUCCI DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S UP TO -- "Anthony Scaramucci Announces Mystery Media Venture," by NYT's Mike Grynbaum: "The arc of Mr. Scaramucci's career is long and strange, and lately it has bent toward ignominy. After being fired by President Trump, sued for divorce and turned into a late-night piñata for his foul-mouthed speaking habits, Mr. Scaramucci is trying to mount a comeback with a media venture he is calling The Scaramucci Post.

"So far, the project's contours are vague. 'It's going to start out experiential on the net,' Mr. Scaramucci, an American flag pinned to his lapel, said during a launch party at the Hunt & Fish Club on West 44th Street. He was invited to elaborate. 'We're going to create traffic and content and an experience using Facebook, Instagram and Twitter,' Mr. Scaramucci said. (The @ScaramucciPost Twitter account, with its caveat that 'Follows ??? Job Offers,' has been something of a mystery in political circles.) ... Later, he conceded that he had 'no idea what the Scaramucci Post is.'" <http://nyti.ms/2yGhxDf>

TOM PRICE'S LEGACY -- "Why Price's conservative imprint on HHS is likely to endure," by Paul Demko, David Pittman and Brianna Ehley: "Tom Price may be gone as Health and Human Services secretary, but his efforts to put a conservative stamp on the \$1.1 trillion agency, from promoting faith groups to scrapping Obamacare implementation, are likely to move forward without him. A 'draft strategic plan' for HHS, published before Price resigned last week, references 'faith' or 'faith-based' organizations more than 40 times in its five-year statement of priorities. The Obama

administration's last strategic plan contained only three such references. ...

"Conspicuously absent is virtually any mention of the agency's responsibility to carry out provisions of the Affordable Act, which had dominated the Obama administration's plan. Also gone are most references to the health needs of minority groups, from African-Americans who have some of the nation's worst health outcomes, to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals.

"Price's yet-to-be-named successor would be free to change the agency's road map and priorities ... [b]ut many of the draft's priorities embody goals of the Trump administration and are therefore expected to survive. The five-year road map is often the vehicle for an administration to elaborate on its ideological goals, whether around culture war issues like abortion, or the role of safety net programs."

<http://politi.co/2xd7aun>

WAR REPORT -- "Pentagon identifies 10th Mountain soldier killed in Iraq," by Military Times' Shawn Snow: "The Pentagon on Tuesday released the name of the soldier killed Sunday in Iraq. Spc. Alexander Missildine, 20, of Tyler, Texas, was killed when an improvised explosive device exploded near his vehicle on Sunday in Ninawa Province, Iraq, according to a statement from the Defense Department."

<http://bit.ly/2xcRBTi>

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION -- "DOJ releases overruled memos finding it illegal for presidents to appoint relatives," by Josh Gerstein: "The Justice Department has released a series of recently overruled legal memos concluding that presidents cannot appoint their relatives to the White House staff or presidential commissions, even to unpaid posts. In January, a career Justice Department official essentially declared the earlier opinions erroneous or obsolete, clearing the way for President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner to take a senior adviser position in the White House. First daughter Ivanka Trump later took a similar official but unpaid slot under the same legal rationale.

"The newly-disclosed opinions, issued to the Nixon, Carter and Reagan White House and obtained by POLITICO Monday through a Freedom of Information Act request, detail how Justice Department lawyers concluded for decades that such appointments of family members were illegal under an anti-nepotism law passed in 1967."

<http://politi.co/2xWMyp8> ... **The opinions** <http://bit.ly/2hMekPq>

ON THE WORLD STAGE -- "Jalal Talabani, Kurdish Leader and Iraq's First Postwar President, Is Dead at 83," by the NYT's Mark McDonald <http://nyti.ms/2xdalfV>

HAPPY 25TH ANNIVERSARY to Barack and Michelle Obama, who got married on Oct. 3, 1992 -- **25 photo gallery** <http://politi.co/2yl7APh>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- MATT RHOADES, founder of Definers Public Affairs, and **JAMIE RHOADES,** owner of PR firm Quartus Strategies, email friends and family:

"Vivian Pearl Rhoades was born at Sibley Memorial Hospital on October 2nd at 2:24 p.m. The doctors and nurses have done a great job again. Baby and Mom are both doing great. Vivian weighed in at 8lbs with some very chubby cheeks. We hope this note brings a smile during a very sad week." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2yGeHhh>

TRANSITIONS -- Haroon Ullah starts today as chief strategy officer at the Broadcasting Board of Governors. He was most recently on the policy planning staff for Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and advised three secretaries of state.

OBAMA ALUMNI -- Rafael Lemaitre has joined the consultancy IEM as chief communications officer. He was national director of public affairs at FEMA during the last several years of the Obama administration.

***** **A message from Koch Industries:** Flint Hills Resources, a Koch company, is the fifth largest ethanol producer in the United States - with seven ethanol plants, and 850 million gallons of annual capacity. Each year, farmers from America's heartland sell 288 million bushels of their corn to our facilities where we extract the necessary ingredients for both ethanol and high-quality biodiesel. We convert the remaining portions of the kernels into distillers grains, a livestock feed that helps nourish hogs, cattle and poultry. Farmers work hard to grow their crops, and we strive to help create the most value from their harvest. We also focus on reducing waste and leaving more natural resources available for future needs. It's part of Koch's commitment to operate responsibly in the communities across America that are home to our more than 70,000 U.S. employees. Learn more about our renewable fuels at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

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From: Morning Energy
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 3:07:46 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Energy, presented by the Renewable Fuels Association: Sizing up the tax bill's energy provisions — Turn your shutdown countdown clocks back on — National Security Strategy could drop climate change as security threat

By Anthony Adragna | 12/18/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén, Eric Wolff and Emily Holden

POISED FOR TAX PACKAGE PASSAGE: Congressional Republicans are poised this week to pass a massive tax package [H.R. 1 \(115\)](#), and the final text that emerged Friday evening was mostly good news for the renewables industry that had been unnerved by provisions in earlier versions. And the package will realize a decades-old GOP dream of opening the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling that Speaker [Paul Ryan](#)'s office hailed as "a win for American energy" Sunday. Check out some of the highlights via Pro's Eric Wolff and Ben Lefebvre [here](#).

-Spared: The final bill leaves wind and solar tax credits untouched, meaning they will continue to be phased down as originally envisioned in a 2015 bill. It preserves a tax break for electric vehicles and restores credits for abandoned oil wells and enhanced oil recovery that the House-passed bill removed. And it keeps a provision allowing utilities to continue to deduct interest on loans without the limitation placed on other businesses.

-What's on oil's mind? The bill keeps Senate language permitting the selloff of up to \$600 million in Strategic Petroleum Reserve oil if revenues from opening ANWR drilling come up short of the \$1 billion forecast, as many critics have warned is likely. It adds a provision offering deductions to investors in master limited partnerships, the corporate structure for many pipeline companies. And it temporarily lifts the cap on Gulf of Mexico oil and gas production revenue sharing to facilitate additional coastal restoration and protection projects.

-Can't stop the BEAT: Senate taxwriters made an effort to tweak the Base Erosion Anti-Abuse Tax in ways that would help renewable project developers. The tax is intended to keep U.S. profits domestic - but the final version doesn't go far enough to solve the problem in earlier iterations, renewables backers say. The fix in the conference bill allows banks to take 80 percent of the production tax credit and investment tax credit until 2025, but also expands which institutions are affected and makes other tweaks. "We are uncertain how the marketplace will react to the fact that more multi-national firms may now be covered by the BEAT, and tax credits may not all be useable in any given year," Gregory Wetstone, president and CEO of the ACORE, said in a statement. If you really want to get down and dirty with the BEAT and how other parts of the tax bill affected renewable projects, check out [this blog](#) post by Keith Martin, the co-head of U.S. projects for the law firm of Norton Rose Fulbright.

-Not there: As expected, none of the expired tax credits for small wind, fuel cells, and other "orphans" made it into the finished product. There's some chatter of moving an additional package before breaking for the holidays, but count ME as decidedly skeptical lawmakers will

find the energy for such a push.

Timeline on this: Senate Majority Whip [John Cornyn](#) expressed confidence the bill would pass his chamber this week "probably on Tuesday" during an appearance on ABC's "This Week." Pro Tax's Bernie Becker has [an excellent look](#) at how the bill's expected passage is the culmination of half a life's work for a large number of Washington tax insiders.

FINAL SPRINT TO THE HOLIDAYS! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Bracewell's Frank Maisano was first up to identify former Alabama Rep. Parker Griffith as the last sitting congressman to switch parties. For today: How many current senators are older than 80? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

SHUTDOWN WATCH: Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin isn't expecting a government shutdown at the end of this week, though he said during a Sunday appearance on "Fox News Sunday" he couldn't be sure, POLITICO's Martin Matishak [reports](#). "I can't rule it out, but I can't imagine it occurring," he said. Remember, facing a Friday deadline, lawmakers still aren't sure how much money they'll have to spend in fiscal year 2018 since they haven't reached a spending cap deal. POLITICO's Rachael Bade, Seung Min Kim and Jennifer Haberkorn look at the sticky situation facing the GOP this week [here](#).

Ahead of the deadline, Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló [asked](#) congressional leaders to provide emergency assistance to his devastated island before they skip town for the holidays. "No governor should ever be put in the position of having to deny that hope in the aftermath of a catastrophic disaster due to the inaction of Congress," he said. Lawmakers from Florida and Texas have also been pushing aggressively for disaster relief in this stopgap spending package.

ICYMI: A White House document circulating among agencies and obtained by POLITICO is setting the stage for a solar trade war with China, Pro's Emily Holden [reports](#). The administration appears to be preparing its messaging ahead of setting punitive tariffs on Chinese-made solar power equipment. The tariffs would increase the cost of solar power in the U.S. and could slow expansion of the energy source and eliminate installation jobs. But the White House paper suggests trade barriers may be necessary to foster domestic solar manufacturing, particularly for advanced solar technologies.

The document notes solar power demand in the U.S. and abroad is growing rapidly and argues "federal policies should ensure that the United States can benefit from this expansion." And it argues the administration should consider "the potential negative impact on U.S. energy security of increased reliance on imported energy technology," in carrying out an executive order on energy independence and in developing a response to the Section 201 trade case from the two domestic manufacturers. "China will likely expand its dominance to include advanced solar technologies," the paper says. "U.S. policy should be focused on creating competitive conditions for U.S. companies to thrive in the global marketplace, and compete against China and other solar players."

Suniva, one of the companies seeking the tariffs, issued a statement in response to the article:

"Suniva applauds the Trump Administration for championing American manufacturing in the face of cheating by China and its proxies who want to kill American jobs and make America dependent on China for its energy and security needs."

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** This week marks the tenth anniversary of the Renewable Fuel Standard, helping to provide consumer choice at the pump. The RFS has been an unmitigated success, helping to clean the air, lower gasoline prices, provide greater energy security and boost local economies. Learn more at www.ethanolrfa.org. **

SOMETHING ELSE TO WATCH: President Donald Trump is expected to discuss his National Security Strategy today and his administration will remove climate change from the list of national security threats, The Federalist [reports](#). The Obama administration's Pentagon called climate change a "threat multiplier" and the former president [warned](#) back in 2015: "Climate change constitutes a serious threat to global security, an immediate risk to our national security, and, make no mistake, it will impact how our military defends our country." Secretary of State Rex Tillerson [told a Senate committee](#) back in January he didn't consider climate change an "imminent national security threat." According to excerpts, the new document will state: "Climate policies will continue to shape the global energy system... The United States will continue to advance an approach that balances energy security, economic development, and environmental protection."

UNDER SCRUTINY: A lawyer working with America Rising has been filing public records requests for EPA employees who have been critical of Administrator Scott Pruitt's leadership of the agency, the New York Times [reports](#). "This is a witch hunt against E.P.A. employees who are only trying to protect human health and the environment," Gary Morton, an agency employee in Philadelphia, said. That comes as a group associated with America Rising, Definers Public Affairs, has been hired by EPA for "media monitoring" services to track how the agency is being covered.

NYC PLANS 'PEOPLE'S HEARING' ON CLEAN POWER PLAN: After being snubbed by EPA for a public hearing on its plans to repeal the Clean Power Plan, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Friday they'll hold a "people's hearing" on the regulation Jan. 9 where they'll hear and compile testimony for the agency. Registration [here](#). ME readers no doubt remember Schneiderman is leading a group of states and localities defending the Obama-era regulation's legality.

DEPARTMENT OF BAD TIMING: Just a few days ahead of a Thursday vote on the future of Georgia Power's two new nuclear reactors at Plant Vogtle, Hartfield-Jackson International Airport suffered an hours-long power failure that grounded thousands of travelers as the holiday travel season kicked into high gear, USA Today [reports](#).

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! Today marks two years since Congress passed and then-President Barack Obama signed legislation that [lifted the crude oil export ban](#) as part of a broader package that also extended prized tax credits for the wind and solar industries.

GREENS SUE OVER EPA'S PLAN FOR TEXAS HAZE: Environmental groups on Friday

sued EPA over its federal plan to limit haze-causing pollution from Texas power plants. The rule has been supposed to have been in place by 2007, a delay that prompted a federal court to order a plan be finalized by either Texas or EPA by September. Without a submission from Texas, EPA was forced to finalize a federal version, but environmentalists complained that the Trump administration's plan was a "sham rule" that would not reduce pollution nearly as much as the Obama administration's proposal would have. In addition to a lawsuit in the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, the groups also submitted a petition for reconsideration to EPA.

KEEP AN EYE OUT: Pro's Alex Guillén notes in Energy Regulation Watch that while the holidays tend to be a slower time for regulatory news, EPA told a federal court this week that its Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for a replacement to the Clean Power Plan will publish "in the upcoming weeks." That notice, which OMB completed its review of on Thursday, sets the stage to replace the Obama-era rule.

PUBLISH THE RULE! Three senior House Energy and Commerce Democrats - Frank Pallone, Paul Tonko and Diana DeGette - aren't pleased by Pruitt's plan to gather more input on the agency's Lead and Copper Rule and urged him to immediately move ahead with a proposed rule. "Administrator Pruitt is hiding this delay behind the guise of a novel consultation process with the states, but the states need to see the proposed rule in order to provide relevant comments," they said in a statement. "The EPA previously pledged to publish a proposed rule to revise the Lead and Copper Rule this month, and therefore we call on Administrator Pruitt to publish the proposed rule immediately."

FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE: POLITICO New York's Keshia Clukey takes a look at how new SUNY Chancellor Kristina Johnson, a former official with the U.S. Department of Energy under the Obama administration, is proposing the use of 21st century innovation to help solve SUNY's fiscal and infrastructure problems. The benefits of making campuses more energy efficient are threefold, she told POLITICO. The lion's share of SUNY's energy use is attributed to its approximately 2,800 buildings - 2,346 of which are state-operated, including academic buildings, hospitals and residence halls. Upgrades could include weatherizing buildings, using more efficient heating and cooling techniques, or even adding solar panels. This helps the bottom line, saving campuses money, reducing operating costs and giving "local budget relief, which allows them and the presidents to do more for the academic mission, Johnson said. Read more here.

ANYBODY WANT IN? Republicans are struggling to find a top-tier candidate to challenge North Dakota Sen. Heidi Heitkamp even though she represents a state that was a solid win for Trump, the Associated Press reports. Perhaps the highest-profile potential challenger, Rep. Kevin Cramer, has been reticent about launching a bid even though the president strongly pushed him to run earlier this fall. "I'm not sure that our party fully grasps or understands the magnitude of a campaign against Heidi Heitkamp," former Republican Gov. Ed Schafer said.

PERDUE WRITES GRIJALVA ON GRAND CANYON MINING: Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue attempted to reassure House Natural Resources Ranking Member Raúl Grijalva in a letter that a recommendation from the administration to look into lifting a moratorium on uranium mining near the Grand Canyon was merely "for consideration" and did not represent a

federal action. But that didn't reassure Grijalva: "Opening up new uranium mines or allowing new claims to be filed in this region is a dead issue. Let's drop it and move on once and for all," he said in a statement.

SPOTTED: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and his wife, Lola, at Arlington National Cemetery on Saturday morning for the annual Wreaths Across America event. Picture [here](#).

QUICK HITS

- North Cascades grizzly bear recovery work halted by Interior Department. [The Missoulian](#).
- E.P.A. Contractor Has Spent Past Year Scouring the Agency for Anti-Trump Officials. [New York Times](#).
- More than \$600,000 spent on police gear for pipeline protest. [AP](#).
- Coal leases OK'd, suit immediately follows. [Grand Junction Daily Sentinel](#).
- Clean coal plant in Wyoming slated for operation by summer. [AP](#).
- Cuba's Castro and Russian oil executive meet in Havana. [Reuters](#).

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** The Renewable Fuel Standard, helping to provide consumer choice at the pump, was signed into law ten years ago this week. Thanks to the RFS, consumers have greatly benefitted in the past decade, with cleaner air, lower gasoline prices and a boost to local economies. Recently, President Trump's Environmental Protection Agency finalized a strong RFS for next year that maintains the statutory 15 billion gallon requirement for conventional renewable fuels like corn ethanol. President Trump understands that consumers benefit when the RFS is implemented as Congress intended. Learn more at www.ethanolrfa.org. #thankyouRFS **

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2017/12/18/sizing-up-the-tax-bills-energy-provisions-054933>

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Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
Cc: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Mon 11/13/2017 3:08:36 PM
Subject: RE: Interview

Joe Perticone of Business Insider reached out and wants to interview the Administrator. He covers Congress more generally.

He's a fair reporter and I worked with him a lot when I was at the RNC and he was at IJ Review. BI has a large readership.

From: Joe Perticone [mailto:jperticone@businessinsider.com]
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 10:03 AM
To: Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Cc: Pamela Engel <pengel@businessinsider.com>; Brett LoGiurato <blogiurato@businessinsider.com>
Subject: Interview

Hey James,

Would love to interview Administrator Pruitt about how the EPA is working now that it's a year into the Trump administration, talking policy specifics and all. I've cc'ed to this email my editors, Brett LoGiurato and Pam Engel too. I hope we can work something out.

Best,

Joe

--

Joe Perticone

Politics Reporter | Business Insider

150 5th Ave, 8th Floor, New York, NY

Mobile: 415.233.2115

Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Lisa Friedman
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 3:15:03 PM
Subject: Follow up question on MJ story

Hello,

Can you please provide a comment about why the news compilation that Definers has been hired to do can not be performed in house?

Secondly - were there any issues with Bulletin that caused EPA to switch providers for this service?

Third, as there are clearly other companies that perform this work -- like the one EPA had previously contracted with -- can you please provide an explanation of why this was a no-bid contract.

Thank you,
Lisa

Lisa Friedman
Reporter, The New York Times
202-862-0306 office
202-251-2083 cell
Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com
Twitter: @LFFriedman

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 6/19/2017 10:33:52 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Starbucks: ONE DEAD in London terror attack -- INSIDE Trump's tech meeting -- JARED back to Israel -- DEMS to try to weaponize Trump's 'mean' comment -- BRITTANY BRAMELL to TSA -- KEVIN SHERIDAN engaged -- B'DAY: Jeff Mason

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Starbucks
06/19/2017 06:30 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](#)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](#)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](#))

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Driving the Day

Good Monday morning. THE PRESIDENT is at the White House today, where he'll meet with the president of Panama and then with a number of tech leaders. (Scroll down a bit if you'd like to see who from the administration and business is expected to attend.)

TERROR IN LONDON -- THE SUN -- "LONDON MOSQUE TERROR: Finsbury Park Mosque terrorist screaming 'I'm going to kill all Muslims' drives van into worshippers killing one and injuring ten," by Ben Leo, Gemma Mullin, Neal Baker and Lauren Fruen: "ONE person has been killed and ten injured in a suspected terrorist attack after a hired van ploughed into Muslim worshippers leaving a mosque after late-night Ramadan prayers. The attacker - a 48-year-old white man - ran down pedestrians before being pinned down by hero bystanders and arrested by police.

"Scotland Yard has confirmed one man was pronounced dead at the scene and officers are in the process of informing his next of kin. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu, the Senior National Coordinator for Counter Terrorism, this morning said: 'This is being treated as a terrorist attack. 'The attack unfolded whilst a man was receiving first aid from the public at the scene, sadly, he has died. 'Any causative link between his death and the attack will form part of our investigation. It is too early to state if his death was as a result of the attack.' The attacker struck outside the Muslim Welfare House, close to Finsbury Park mosque, in north London as the area was busy with worshippers who had been attending Ramadan night prayers." <http://bit.ly/2sJEoPt>

WE ARE STILL AT WAR -- "As U.S. Adds Troops in Afghanistan, Trump's Strategy Remains Undefined," by NYT's Mark Landler and Michael Gordon: "When President

Trump made his first major decision on the war in Afghanistan, he did not announce it in a nationally televised address from the White House or a speech at West Point.

"Instead, the Pentagon issued a news release late one afternoon last week confirming that the president had given the defense secretary, Jim Mattis, the authority to send several thousand additional troops to a war that, in its 16th year, engages about 8,800 American troops. Mr. Trump, who writes avidly on Twitter about war and peace in other parts of the world, said nothing about the announcement. But its effect was unmistakable: He had outsourced the decision on how to proceed militarily in Afghanistan to the Pentagon, a startling break with how former President Barack Obama and many of his predecessors handled the anguished task of sending Americans into foreign conflicts.

"The White House played down the Pentagon's vaguely worded statement, which referred only to setting 'troop levels' as a stopgap measure -- a tacit admission of the administration's internal conflicts over what to do about the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan." <http://nyti.ms/2sriOvO>

-- WAPO: "Afghan war faces flurry of setbacks as new U.S. military policy nears," by Pamela Constable and Sayed Salahuddin in Islamabad: "[C]omplicating the picture are questions about how to deal with neighboring Pakistan and balance separate fights against Afghan and foreign-based insurgents. In the latest attack Sunday morning, Taliban fighters stormed a police base in southeastern Paktia province after detonating a suicide car bomb outside. At least five members of security forces and several civilians were killed, officials said. The attack came one day after an Afghan army commando shot and wounded seven U.S. troops inside an army base in northern Balkh province." <http://wapo.st/2rGZlu9>

SYRIA -- "U.S. aircraft shoots down a Syrian government jet over northern Syria, Pentagon says," by WaPo's Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Kareem Fahim: <http://wapo.st/2sOe4Do>

-- "Israel Gives Secret Aid to Syrian Rebels," by WSJ's Rory Jones, Noam Raydan and Suha Ma'ayeh: "Israel has been regularly supplying Syrian rebels near its border with cash as well as food, fuel and medical supplies for years, a secret engagement in the enemy country's civil war aimed at carving out a buffer zone populated by friendly forces. The Israeli army is in regular communication with rebel groups and its assistance includes undisclosed payments to commanders that help pay salaries of fighters and buy ammunition and weapons, according to interviews with about half a dozen Syrian fighters. Israel has established a military unit that oversees the support in Syria-a country that it has been in a state of war with for decades-and set aside a specific budget for the aid." <http://on.wsj.com/2rH5ZQQ>

INSIDE THE WEST WING: PLAYING FAVORITES -- "Trump demands face time with favored Cabinet heads," by Tara Palmeri and Andrew Restuccia: "Every president has regular contact with key Cabinet members, but Trump, who remains

deeply mistrustful of career agency officials, has turned the White House into a hangout for his chosen department heads. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has met with the president at least 34 times since he was confirmed in February, according to a POLITICO analysis of Trump's interactions since taking office. ...

"Senior aides say Trump demands facetime with his appointees in part because he doesn't trust bureaucrats who do the day-to-day work of the federal government. The president shuns them as tools of what he often refers to as the 'deep state,' and blames them for the frequent, unflattering news stories coming from his White House, according to two White House aides. But for Trump's Cabinet members, proximity is a plus. Being physically present at the White House ensures that they have a say in policymaking - and serves as an indication of status with the president." <http://politi.co/2sh7IR2>

***** **A message from Starbucks:** Intuitive leadership, teamwork and a dedication to service -just a few of the valuable qualities veterans possess that inspired Starbuck to hire 10,000 veterans and military spouses by 2018. We reached our initial goal 18 months early and have proudly increased our commitment to 25,000 hires by 2025 <http://sbux.co/2stiS17> *****

LEGAL SHUFFLE -- "Kushner Is Said to Be Reconsidering His Legal Team," by NYT's Ben Protess Jessica Silver-Greenberg and Sharon LaFraniere: "Representatives of Jared Kushner, President Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, have quietly contacted high-powered criminal lawyers about potentially representing him in the wide-ranging investigation into Russia's influence on the 2016 election, according to three people briefed on the matter.

"Some of Mr. Kushner's allies have raised questions about the link between his current lawyer, Jamie S. Gorelick, and Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel appointed to investigate the Trump campaign's ties to Russia, according to one of the people who spoke on condition of anonymity. Before the Justice Department named him to the special counsel post, Mr. Mueller was a law partner with Ms. Gorelick at the Washington firm of WilmerHale. ...

"After the appointment of our former partner Robert Mueller as special counsel, we advised Mr. Kushner to obtain the independent advice of a lawyer with appropriate experience as to whether he should continue with us as his counsel,' the statement from Ms. Gorelick said. ...

"Among the lawyers contacted, one person said, was Abbe D. Lowell, a prominent trial lawyer whose previous clients include Jack Abramoff, the powerful Republican lobbyist, in a corruption scandal that shook Washington in 2005. Mr. Lowell is currently defending Senator Robert Menendez, Democrat of New Jersey, against federal corruption charges. Mr. Lowell declined to comment." <http://nyti.ms/2ruJPNX>

KUSHNER'S NEXT BIG TASK -- "Trump aides Kushner and Greenblatt to visit Israel, Palestinians this week," by Reuters' Steve Holland: "U.S. President Donald

Trump is sending two top aides to Jerusalem and Ramallah this week to discuss potential next steps in his bid to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, a White House official said on Sunday. Going on the trip will be White House senior adviser Jared Kushner, who is Trump's son-in-law and husband of his daughter Ivanka Trump, and Jason Greenblatt, a top national security aide. Greenblatt will arrive in the region on Monday and Kushner on Wednesday.

"The talks follow Trump's discussions last month with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Behind-the-scenes conversations have been taking place since the Trump trip, the White House official said. ... Kushner and Greenblatt will have meetings in Jerusalem and Ramallah to hear directly from the Israeli and Palestinian leadership 'about their priorities and potential next steps,' the official said." <http://reut.rs/2tiT30O>

DEM'S GEORGIA CATCH 22 -- "Democrats sweat the details in Georgia special election," by Gabe Debenedetti in Sandy Springs, Georgia.: "Democrats are closer than they ever could have imagined to winning a House seat in the Republican suburbs of Atlanta, and dealing a resounding blow to Donald Trump. But they're also gripped by anxiety about what happens if they fall short Tuesday. A loss in Georgia's special election here could leave the party demoralized, with little to show for all the furious organizing, fundraising and spending in a handful of congressional special elections in the early months of the Trump administration. As a result, Democrats are now straining to throw everything they have at Georgia's Sixth Congressional District to push Jon Ossoff over the top against Republican Karen Handel, aiming to prove they can win the suburban districts that may pave the way to a House majority in 2018." <http://politi.co/2srqj5S>

THE NEW DEM TALKING POINTS -- "Democrats use Trump 'mean' comment to tar GOP," by Josh Dawsey and Seung Min Kim: "Democrats are seeking to capitalize on President Donald Trump calling the Republican health care bill 'mean' ahead of the Senate's vote to repeal Obamacare, seeing it as a pivotal moment in an issue that could drive the 2018 midterm elections. The comments from Trump, made privately to senators last week, were largely overshadowed by a mass shooting at a Congressional baseball practice and new developments in the special counsel's investigation into Trump and his associates.

"But a senior Democratic aide said the party plans to revive the 'mean' comment part of floor speeches, press conferences and social media, and consultants said they craved the image of Trump celebrating in the Rose Garden with House members over a 'mean' bill that hurt poor Americans. 'We will be weaving mean into the broader attack in a prominent way,' the aide said." <http://politi.co/2sGAnKv>

-- It's important to note: There are just nine legislative days left before Congress breaks for the July 4 recess. Senate Republicans have still not released an Obamacare repeal bill for public review. It is crunch time for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to find a path forward for a health care bill that can pass before the break.

ALSO, WE HEAR that House Republicans aren't going to necessarily take up whatever the Senate passes. They do plan a vote on something, but it's not yet clear what the House will be able to stomach.

HAPPENING TODAY -- The much-discussed tech summit organized by President Donald Trump's Office of American Innovation is bringing together Trump administration heavy hitters with a slew of tech bigwigs.

-- **WHITE HOUSE ATTENDEES:** Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, Jared Kushner, Ivanka Trump, Chris Liddell, Reed Cordish, Gary Cohn, Dina Powell, Stephen Miller, National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster and Tom Bossert.

-- **AGENCY ATTENDEES:** Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Homeland Secretary Ret. Gen. John Kelly, OMB Director Mick Mulvaney, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and CMS Administrator Seema Verma.

-- **CEOS:** Ajay Banga, CEO of MasterCard; Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon; Zachary Bookman, CEO of OpenGov; Safra Catz, Co-Chief Executive of Oracle; Tim Cook, CEO of Apple; John Doerr, Chairman of Kleiner Perkins; Pat Gelsinger, CEO of VMware; Alex Karp, CEO of Palantir; Brian Krzanich, CEO of Intel; Tom Leighton, CEO of Akamai; Bill McDermott, CEO of SAP; Steven Mollenkopf, CEO of Qualcomm; Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft; Shantanu Narayen, CEO of Adobe; Ginni Rometty, CEO of IBM; Eric Schmidt, Executive Chairman of Alphabet; Julie Sweet, CEO of Accenture; and Peter Thiel, Founders Fund.

-- **"White House meetings add to tech's awkward dance with Trump,"** by Steven Overly: "Amazon, Google, Facebook and Lyft have all hired lobbyists with connections to Trump or his Cabinet members, as they seek to influence the administration on everything from taxes to immigration." <http://politi.co/2ruMXsV>

THE JUICE ...

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: DNC CHAIR TOM PEREZ** is endorsing Puerto Rico statehood. Perez, who has two siblings born in Puerto Rico, said in a statement provided to Playbook that he believes Puerto Ricans should have the same rights as those on the mainland and that his personal view is that statehood is the best method to provide full representation in government and equal rights.

-- **STOPTERRORNOW.ORG** is dropping \$100,000 for a USA Today ad as part of its campaign to push Trump and Congress to put political and economic pressure on Qatar. The full-page ad is an open-letter from the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews founder and president Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein. It also includes digital ads on the USA Today website. **The ad** <http://politi.co/2sOdIfN>

-- **BRITTANY BRAMELL** has left Uber, and is starting today at TSA as the assistant administrator of public affairs.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump, First Lady Melania Trump and their son Barron Trump cross the South Lawn after arriving at The White House on June 18. | Zach Gibson/Getty

A BI-PARTISAN KUMBAYA MOMENT -- "Israel trip calms some D.C. tensions," by Daniel Lippman: "A number of former top Trump campaign officials and prominent Democrats say that their trip last week to Israel helped them dial down the bitter partisanship of current-day Washington. Trump campaign alumni Corey Lewandowski and David Bossie, former Obama White House deputy press secretary Bill Burton, and Paul Begala were among the participants in the seven-day trip that ended Saturday. ... The trip was sponsored by the American Israel Education Foundation and organized by AIPAC political director Rob Bassin; other trip-goers included Juleanna Glover, Corry Bliss, Trey Nix, Brad Todd and Jef Pollack." *With a pic of the full group in front of the Knesset* <http://politi.co/2sOcEJ4>

WEST COAST WATCH -- "These Democrats feel guilty for sitting out the 2016 elections, and they aren't waiting to register voters for the midterms," by L.A. Times' Javier Panzer: <http://lat.ms/2rH3Y7i>

***** **A message from Starbucks:** Starbucks is committed to hiring 25,000 veterans and military spouses by 2025, creating new opportunities as they transition from military life to civilian careers and bring with them strong leadership and character. Meet one of our partners (employees), retired Marine Corps Master Sergeant George Page, a store manager in San Diego: <http://sbux.co/2tw3JlW> *****

MEDIAWATCH: HADAS GOLD -- "Fox's Bolling talks of a future Senate run": "Fox News anchor Eric Bolling may have just signed a new multi-year contract, but he's also eyeing a possible career change: A future run for Senate. For now, Bolling is secure in his job as co-host of the new show 'The Fox News Specialists.' But In a recent telephone interview from Fox News headquarters in New York City, Bolling said that 'when the lights go down on the TV career' he wants to make a primary challenge against a sitting Republican senator in the South.

"A lot of Republicans run as conservatives only to be elected , and we find out they're not conservative at all," said Bolling, who considers himself one of President Donald Trump's longest and most loyal supporters. Bolling, who grew up in Chicago and went to college in Florida, declined to specify which state in the South he'd run, which senator he would challenge or even when it would happen (it could be 'never' or when his current contract runs out in three years, he said). He also denied he's taking any concrete actions to run, including speaking with consultants -- 'no, no, friends' he said

when asked if he's had conversations about planning a campaign."

<http://politi.co/2sO3yMf>

-- **JACK SHAFER** on "Megyn Kelly Pantses Alex Jones": <http://politi.co/2sFCQ8i>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: HHS Secretary Tom Price on the Sunday afternoon ATL-DCA flight. Flying coach with two security agents.

ENGAGED -- Kevin Sheridan, founder of the Sheridan Media Group and a Romney/Ryan and RNC alum, got engaged to **Erika Gutierrez**, founder of epgPR.com and daughter of former Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez. They met at an event in 2015, and were reintroduced at the Jefferson through friends a year later. He proposed at their new home Saturday evening. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2rM6tAH>

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- Ari Schaffer, research analyst in the White House communications shop and an America Rising alum, married **Marissa Schwartz**, a senior analyst at The Advisory Board Company, on Sunday at the Rockleigh Country Club in New Jersey. The two met at Keshet Israel Synagogue in Georgetown. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2sGzT79> ... <http://bit.ly/2tEqg66> ... <http://bit.ly/2sO4i4d>

--**Alessandro Ago (Alex)**, son of D.C. publicist Janet Donovan and Amb. Pietro Ago, married **Emma Bernstein** at the Kohl Mansion in Burlingame, CA. Ago is director of programming and special projects at USC while Bernstein is assistant to the president at Imagine Entertainment. "In keeping with their cinematic interests, they created a movie poster in honor of their wedding." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2sJzphx> ... **The poster** <http://bit.ly/2sNUOpy>

BUSH ALUMNI -- Glynda Becker, director of federal relations at Washington State University and a Bush administration alum, married **Tom Fenter** in an outdoor ceremony at the Suncadia resort located outside of Seattle. The couple was introduced by former Bush alumnae Susan McColley Benhoff when she invited her brother last minute to join the group at Outer Banks for their annual Memorial Day Weekend beach trip. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2sO9pRy> ... <http://bit.ly/2tiwzwX>

SPOTTED: Susan McColley Benhoff and Kevin Benhoff, Suhail Khan, Warren and Emily Tryon, Mike and Rhonda Gallagher, Connie and Gary Partoyan, Kelle Strickland and Chad Adams, Rob McKenna.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Jeff Mason, WH correspondent for Reuters and president of the WHCA. How he's celebrating: "I'm spending the day in Bonn, Germany, where I'm accepting the Deutsche Welle Freedom of Speech Award on behalf of the White House Correspondents' Association. It's an honor to be here to discuss the work of the WHCA

and extra special to me personally because I was born in Germany -- my folks were stationed here with the U.S. Air Force in the 1970s. I'm celebrating with my twin bro, Brian, (happy birthday, dear brother!) and with close family friends from the village we lived in as kids." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2rMsdfP>

BIRTHDAYS: David DiMartino, a Boston native and Bruins fan, now at Blue Engine Message and Media (h/t Erik Smith) ... former SEC chairwoman Mary Schapiro ... WaPo's Anne Gearan ... Marcus Brauchli, co-founder and managing partner of North Base Media, the pride of Boulder, and a WSJ and WaPo alum, is 56 (h/t Ben Chang) ... Politico's Alex Isenstadt, the pride of Piedmont, Calif. (h/t Tim Burger) ... Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi is 72 ... Salman Rushdie is 7-0 ... actor Paul Dano is 33 (h/t Nadia Szold) ... David Lat, founder and managing editor of Above the Law, is 42 ... Lara Spencer of "Good Morning America" and the pride of Garden City ... Politico's Tim Starks ... Slate contributor Seth Stevenson, author of "Grounded: A Down to Earth Journey Around the World" ... Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-Calif.) is 38 ... Rep. Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.) is 63 ... Rep. Trent Franks (R-Ariz.) is 6-0 ... Slate's Isaac Chotiner, a Houston Rockets fan and TNR alum ... former Rep. Bob Dold (R-Ill.) is 46 ...

... **CBS News producers Louise Dufresne** and Christina Ruffini (h/ts Caitlin Conant) ... Tariq Smith, proud NC State Wolfpack alum (h/t Andrew Bates) ... Cragg Hines ... Mary Dalrymple of Eagle Hill Consulting and a Booz Allen alum ... Earl Whipple ... Mike Naple is 34 ... Jenna Sakwa, Speaker Ryan's new director of media affairs. She celebrated with colleagues on the speaker's balcony on Friday, with family in NYC this weekend, and will BBQ with friends on Monday (h/t Ryan press team) ... Michelle Ringuette ... Liz Richards ... Samantha Finke ... Darren Bearson ... Sean Kevelighan ... Hilary Richards ... Michael Akin, president of DC-based strat comms and engagement firm LINK Strategic Partners (h/t wife Wendi) ... Jennifer Fedor ... Raytheon's Aimee Strudwick Gilroy ... Marilyn Miller (h/t Teresa Vilmain) ... former Bush 43 White House and DHS alum Tom Hoare (h/t Ed Cash) ... Michael Robbins ... Ruth Elliott ... Sean Kevelighan ... Bonnie Goldstein ... Matt McKillop is 33 ... Leslea Byrd ... CRC Public Relations is 28 ... Liz Richards ... Paula Abdul is 55 ... actress Zoe Saldana is 39 ... Macklemore (Macklemore and Ryan Lewis) is 34 ... actor Atticus Shaffer is 18 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from Starbucks:** Veterans and military spouses strengthen communities through leadership, service and citizenship. Starbucks is hiring 25,000 veterans and military spouses by 2025, opening 100 additional Military Family Stores in the next five years and expanding our partnerships to create successful transitions for service members and spouses. Learn more: <http://sbux.co/2stiS17> *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Shift
Sent: Thur 8/24/2017 2:05:53 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Shift: Border wall standoff — NRA launches online ad blitz — Union 'turf battle'

By Ted Hesson | 08/24/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Ian Kullgren and Marianne LeVine

BORDER WALL STANDOFF: President Donald Trump's combative speech Tuesday night further stoked the threat of a government shutdown this fall, POLITICO's Josh Dawsey reports. "The fight over the wall is likely to explode in September as the administration wrangles over a new budget, an increase in the debt ceiling, the beginning of a tax reform package and a possible resuscitation of health care legislation," writes Dawsey.

Trump called a wall on the southern border "absolutely necessary" in Tuesday's rally in the Phoenix Convention Center. "Believe me, if we have to close down our government, we're building that wall," Trump said to cheers. But the prospect of a shutdown doesn't have everyone so jazzed. House Speaker [Paul Ryan](#) said Wednesday that Congress could make good on Trump's campaign promise and still avoid such a disruption. "I don't think a government shutdown is necessary, and I don't think most people want to see a government shutdown, ourselves included," he told reporters during a visit to Intel Corp. offices in Oregon.

Top Democrats took the opportunity to bash the wall *and* the shutdown threat. House Minority Leader [Nancy Pelosi](#) said Democrats and some Republicans still opposed Trump's "multi-billion dollar border wall boondoggle" and argued a shutdown would "purposefully hurt American communities." Business leaders can't be thrilled either: Trump's war cry "appeared to send a shiver through the stock market" on Wednesday, MarketWatch reported. More from POLITICO's Dawsey [here](#) and MarketWatch [here](#).

GOOD MORNING! It's Thursday, Aug. 24, and this is Morning Shift, POLITICO's daily tipsheet on employment and immigration policy. Send tips, exclusives and suggestions to thesson@politico.com, ikullgren@politico.com, mlevine@politico.com and tnoah@politico.com. Follow us on Twitter at [@tedhesson](#), [@marianne_levine](#), [@IanKullgren](#) and [@TimothyNoah1](#).

PROGRAMMING NOTE: [Morning Shift](#) will not publish from Aug. 28-Sept. 4. Our next [Morning Shift](#) newsletter will publish on Sept. 5. Please continue to follow Pro Employment & Immigration issues [here](#).

NRA LAUNCHES ONLINE AD BLITZ: The National Restaurant Association is rolling out an ad campaign in 30 House districts this week to pressure lawmakers to vote for Rep. [Bradley Byrne](#)'s joint employer bill when Congress comes back in September. The animated ad (which Morning Shift [featured](#) back in July) will run on Facebook and Twitter in House leadership districts - those of House Speaker Ryan and Majority Leader [Kevin McCarthy](#), among others - as well as in the districts of members on the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

The bill would reverse the NLRB's 2015 *Browning-Ferris* decision, rewriting its "joint employer" standard to limit that classification to businesses that exert direct control over the employees of franchisees and contractors. It's a long-sought change by Republicans and business groups. Watch the ad [here](#).

TESLA'S SAFETY GAMBLE: Tesla workers are worried about preparation for the rollout of the Model 3, perhaps with good reason. "The company's last stretch of manufacturing hyper-stress - the months leading up to the September 2015 delivery of the Model X - brought long hours, mandatory overtime and an 11 percent jump in worker time missed due to injury," Louis Hansen reports for the San Jose Mercury News. "Injuries reported by workers also rose about 5 percent, well beyond auto industry averages, according to an analysis of federal statistics. Production workers say they're concerned about the potential for more injuries and burnout, while earning less than the average autoworkers across the country." More [here](#).

UNION 'TURF BATTLE': A federal appeals judge on Wednesday overturned a lower court's ruling, finding that a New England carpenters' union may have unlawfully taken over territory previously controlled by an ironworkers' union - igniting a "turf battle," as the judge put it, between the two unions.

The plaintiffs - the Connecticut Ironworkers Employers Association and several other related unions - say the carpenters' union changed its subcontracting clauses to cover a wider net of workers, violating antitrust laws. The carpenters' union argued its conduct fell under exemptions for labor activities.

The court said it more or less agreed with the carpenters' union on principle but couldn't render a final decision, citing factual disputes. Instead, it vacated the district court opinion and sent the case back to the lower court. More [here](#).

'RECALCITRANT' COUNTRIES FACE VISA SANCTIONS: The Trump administration has taken steps to enact visa sanctions against four countries that allegedly refused to accept their deported nationals, Stephen Dinan reported in the Washington Times this week. The move stems from an executive order [signed](#) by Trump in January that called for the departments of Homeland Security and State to take action against "recalcitrant countries" that won't take deportees.

A total of 12 countries have been identified as uncooperative in a list that predates the Trump administration, according to DHS (a year ago, the number [was](#) 23). Of the dozen countries (China, Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, Iran, Guinea, Cambodia, Eritrea, Burma, Morocco, Hong Kong and South Sudan), four have been signaled out for visa sanctions. DHS' Lapan wouldn't disclose the countries, but the Washington Times cites sources who said they are Cambodia, Eritrea, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Under the law, the State Department [could discontinue](#) the issuance of immigrant and non-immigration visas to the countries until each accepts its nationals, but such a decision would be a sharp break from precedent. "Both previous times the law was triggered - against Guyana in 2001 and Gambia last year - the State Department only stopped issuing visas to government

officials and their families," the Washington Times reported. The four countries don't send a lot of visitors to the U.S., but in fiscal year 2016, the U.S. issued a total of 14,337 non-immigrant visas to them. More here.

DREAMER ARRESTED DESPITE DACA: A 22-year-old Dreamer recently employed by Amazon was arrested by federal immigration officials last week, Mark Curnutte reports in the Cincinnati Enquirer. Riccy Enriquez Perdomo, 22, was picked up by federal officers on Aug. 17 when she went to a Louisville, Ky., immigration office to post bail for someone held there, the Enquirer reports. Enriquez, born in Honduras, had been enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program since 2015 and had her status renewed on Jan. 31.

Since taking office, President Trump has preserved DACA, which grants deportation relief and access to work permits to undocumented immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as children. But Texas and nine other Republican-led states have threatened to take legal action if Trump doesn't rescind the program by Sept. 5, and the administration has signaled it isn't likely to defend it. Even now, DACA enrollees in several cases have claimed they've been wrongfully targeted by immigration officers. ICE spokesperson Carl Rusnok told Morning Shift the agency is "researching this case," but declined to comment further or provide any reason for her detention.

"Family members of Enriquez are angry with ICE because it keeps moving her and has detained her in four locations since her Thursday arrest," Curnutte writes. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) said in a written statement Wednesday that he was "disturbed" by the report. "My office is in touch with ICE for an explanation," he said. "When he was secretary of DHS, White House Chief of Staff John Kelly assured me that no one with DACA would lose this protection unless they violated the terms of the program, and I intend to hold him to that commitment." More from the Enquirer here.

WOULD DACA HOLD UP IN COURT?: If Texas and other states move forward with litigation against DACA, will it survive? "Legal experts believe if Texas and the nine other states do file a lawsuit to halt DACA, they'll win - particularly if the same federal judge that blocked the broader immigration program under Obama, Judge Andrew Hanen, oversees the latest legal challenge," writes POLITICO's Seung Min Kim.

"Stephen Legomsky, who was chief counsel at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services when the Obama administration launched DACA, said Hanen's 'extreme, extreme hostility' to Obama's 2014 executive actions on immigration 'was a matter of public record,'" Kim writes. If Hanen allows the states to attach the DACA litigation to an ongoing court challenge over another program, there's "no doubt" he'll block it, Legomsky told Kim. "It is more difficult to disrupt an ongoing successful program," he said. "All that said, given the judges they're likely to have, I think they have a very tough challenge." More here.

STORYCORPS VOTES ON UNIONIZING: Employees at StoryCorps, which provides programming to National Public Radio, began voting Tuesday on whether to join the Communications Workers of America, after the National Labor Relations Board ruled that they were eligible to form a collective bargaining unit. The NLRB ruled that employees in certain roles (producers, web developers and production assistants, among others) were eligible to vote.

According to a CWA spokesperson contacted by Morning Shift, mail ballots for satellite offices are due Sept. 12 and votes will be counted Sept. 13. More from Current [here](#).

TODAY: SAG-AFTRA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS: The results of SAG-AFTRA's presidential election will be announced this afternoon. The election hasn't been pretty, according to Variety's Dave McNary. "The divisions within SAG-AFTRA run deep and have existed for the past two decades," he writes. "Remarkably, the two main factions - the moderate-leaning Unite for Strength and the self-styled progressives of Membership First - have managed to revive the debate over the six-month commercials strike in 2000." More [here](#).

WHAT'S A UNION GOOD FOR?: The left-leaning Economic Policy Institute is out with a report today that looks at how unions help working people. Read it [here](#).

FORMER GOOGLE EMPLOYEE HIRES RNC MEMBER: James Damore, the engineer fired from Google for writing a memo that suggested the gender gap in the tech industry was due to biological differences, has hired Republican National Committee member Harmeet Dhillon to represent him, according to Reuters. "[Damore] has not sued Google, a unit of Alphabet Inc, over his termination, but said earlier this month he is exploring his legal options," Reuters reports. Morning Shift hears that Dhillon could be the next general counsel of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. More [here](#).

DHS EMPLOYEES MORE ENGAGED: "Employee engagement at DHS rose 4 percentage points in the last year, according to new data from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey," writes POLITICO's Ted Hesson. "The Office of Personnel Management typically releases the survey data in the fall, but acting DHS Secretary Elaine Duke shared some results with department employees in an email obtained by POLITICO."

"**Compared to** other large government agencies, DHS has typically ranked at or near the bottom in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey," writes Hesson. "An analysis of past survey data by the Partnership for Public Service put DHS dead last in 2015 and 2016. Duke's email didn't say where DHS ranked relative to other large agencies in 2017."

Still, the increase in employee engagement follows a pattern of improvement in recent years. In fiscal year 2016, DHS [gained](#) 3 percentage points. Max Stier, president and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service, stressed that the metric isn't about happiness, it's about getting employees involved and interested in their work. "If you get employees who are engaged you get better performance," he said. More on the DHS data [here](#).

RAISE ACT'S HIGH STANDARDS: Trump endorsed the Raise Act last month, a bill that would slash legal immigration in half over a decade. The legislation, [S. 1720](#), would also create skill-based criteria for legal immigrants. How many Americans would make that cut if they had to meet the Raise Act standards? Roughly two percent, Quoc Trung Bui reports in the New York Times. More [here](#).

COFFEE BREAK

- "Judge may rule next week on letting first deported DREAMer back into the U.S.," from [USA Today](#)

- "France's Macron looks to confront Eastern Europe over low-cost workers," from [The New York Times](#)

- "Spanish thrives in the U.S. despite an English-only drive," from [The New York Times](#)

- "'Spitting in the face of the people of Arizona': Activists decry possible Trump pardon of convicted sheriff," from [The Washington Post](#)

- "Theresa May says deportation letters sent in error," from [POLITICO](#)

- "Scott Walker says there's a budget deal 'in principle,' but GOP lawmakers say no deal yet," from [the Wisconsin State Journal](#)

- "Immigrant investor center to close following alleged fraud at Jay Peak ski resort," from [the Boston Globe](#)

- "Maine Border Patrol ranks expected to grow as federal government goes on a hiring spree," from [Maine Public Radio](#)

- Opinion: "Nissan union vote was influenced," from [the Detroit News](#)

THAT'S ALL FOR MORNING SHIFT.

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-shift/2017/08/24/border-wall-standoff-222054>

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To: alexnazaryan@gmail.com[alexnazaryan@gmail.com]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 10/11/2017 7:46:38 PM
Subject: Here is our statement for Newsweek

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. “Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out

I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

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From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [<mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com>] **On Behalf Of** Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov](mailto: Bowman.Liz@epa.gov)>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Fri 6/9/2017 9:44:53 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: Pruitt's approach to EPA panned by former chiefs — Zinke nears decision on Bears Ears — Carper floats separating consideration of NRC picks

By Anthony Adragna | 06/09/2017 05:42 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff, Sara Stefanini and Alex Guillén

WANT THAT OLD THING BACK? EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has pressed the idea of taking the agency "back to basics," returning to its roots of cleaning up toxic waste sites under the Superfund program and providing safe drinking water, while rejecting the Obama administration's initiatives on issues like climate change. But as Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#), previous EPA administrators from both parties say the agency's mission is far broader than the cramped version Pruitt's promoting. "I don't think it has to be an either-or, nor should it be," said Christine Todd Whitman, George W. Bush's first EPA administrator. "Superfund is not the only issue for human health. Water pollution is a huge issue and very important and you need to work on it, but it's not the only issue. Air is an issue too. Even if you don't want to believe in climate change, you've got to believe that carbon and mercury are not good for you."

It's not just old administrators though. Thomas Jorling, who co-authored the Clean Air Act in 1970 and the Clean Water Act in 1972 as a Senate Republican staffer, said that Pruitt's philosophy of "EPA originalism" is wrong. Continuing to stick to a limited set of cherry-picked priorities Pruitt has chosen to champion is "just disingenuous," he added. "It's all basically a smokescreen to their real intention, which is kind of a moral and ethical corruption, to ... restore the dependence of the United States energy system on fossil fuels." The agency did not make Pruitt available for an interview.

ME EXTRA — HISTORY LESSON: Lee Thomas, Reagan's second-term EPA administrator, said Pruitt's budget-slashing, anti-regulatory agenda has certain parallels to one of his predecessors: Anne Gorsuch Burford, Reagan's first EPA chief and the mother of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch. Burford, who died in 2004, had no previous relationship with agency staff, reduced EPA's budget by 22 percent and once boasted about cutting a book of water regulations from six inches thick to just half an inch. She ultimately resigned in 1983 after being cited for contempt of Congress in a management scandal regarding Superfund, at that time a new program. More than a dozen other agency officials quit in the surrounding months amid a turbulent atmosphere at the agency.

Thomas, at that time deputy director at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, came on as a top official to help right EPA, and two years later returned as administrator after Bill Ruckelshaus had stabilized the agency. "I've seen it go bad. And I've seen what it takes to go back on track," Thomas said. "The public does not want EPA to go through that kind of crisis."

G-7'S (TOTALLY AWKWARD) ENVIRONMENT MEETING: G-7 environment ministers meet in Bologna on Sunday and Monday, just 10 days after Trump announced he was ditching the Paris climate agreement (unless the rest of the world agrees to better terms, of course). Pruitt

will be there as the American representative. The biggest battle to watch for: Will the other six ministers and Pruitt come to any agreement on a communiqué that supports efforts to tackle climate change? (ME bets no.) Disagreements over climate already scuppered a joint statement at the G-7 energy ministers meeting, and Trump refused to back commitments made at the leaders summit last month.

Benvenuti! Pruitt tweeted a picture Thursday from Italy after "mtg w/ U.S. companies doing business in Europe." The agency told ME representatives from Whirlpool, DuPont, Chemours, First Solar and 3M attended, as well as a few Italian companies, but declined to provide any further details on Pruitt's schedule while in Europe.

TGIF MY FRIENDS! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Hunton & Williams' Joe Stanko was first to identify Sen. Lamar Alexander as the former Cabinet member (Education Secretary under President George H.W. Bush) now in the Senate. Your end-of-the-week fun: The spouse of which U.S. senator co-owns the legendary Strand Bookstore? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aaadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

ROUND, ROUND, GET AROUND: He's apparently still in discussions with the White House ahead of a final recommendation about whether to rescind or tweak the designation of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, but Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is planning to keep chugging on his national tour. Zinke plans to visit Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts during a four-day swing kicking off June 13. That trip will include a tour of the hotly contested Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine, another of the more than two dozen monument designations under the Antiquities Act currently under review by the Trump administration.

TRUMP HAILS NEW COAL MINE'S OPENING: Trump hailed the opening Thursday of Corsa Coal Corp. in Pennsylvania, a new mine digging coal used to make steel, as proof deregulation is helping bring jobs to the industry, ABC News reports. "We have withdrawn the United States from the horrendous Paris climate accord, something that would have put our country back decades and decades, we would have never allowed ourselves to be great again," the president said in a video message. About 200 miners, business leaders, and politicians celebrated its opening under a tent amid mining headgear labeled "Make Coal Great Again."

RIDIN' SOLO? Sen. Tom Carper, the top EPW Democrat, has asked Republicans to split off the reappointment of Kristine Svinicki to the NRC from other two Republican nominees in order to fast track the process, Pro's Darius Dixon reports. "One of the things I've suggested to Chairman [John] Barrasso is to find a way to pair those two maybe with one Democrat, and there's a Democrat on the NRC whose term expires ... next year," Carper said. Svinicki, who has been an NRC commissioner for nine years, would have to step down, even temporarily, if the Senate fails to confirm her for another five-year term by June 30.

FOR YOUR WEEKEND RADAR: Activists will gather Saturday at city halls and statehouses across the country to protest Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate accord. "Our communities cannot and will not allow these reckless policies and decisions to wreck our

future," organizers, who include 350.org, the Sierra Club, The Climate Reality Project and many more, said in a statement.

Now here's a far away hearing: Senate Energy and Natural Resources plans to hold a field hearing at 10 a.m. local time Saturday in Cordova, Alaska — accessible only by boat or plane (book you tickets for Mudhole Smith Airport). Representatives from Sandia National Laboratory, Alaska Center for Energy and Power, Alaska Village Electric Cooperative and Alaskan Brewing Company will be examining microgrids and hybrid energy systems. Both Lisa Murkowski and Maria Cantwell, the top Republican and Democrat on the committee, are slated to participate.

WHITEHOUSE: CCS CREDITS BILL READY TO FOR REPRISE: A bill to expand tax credits for carbon capture projects should be ready for introduction soon, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse told ME. "It's close enough that we're having conversations about when and final steps," he said. The bill, which will be co-sponsored with Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, would attempt to revive is one a trio of "orphaned" tax credits, along with credits for geothermal and for advanced nuclear plants — that were left out of the 2015 omnibus bill that extended solar and wind tax incentives.

Warns 'raiding party' has hit EPA: Republican "heads would be exploding" if a Democratic administration simply ignored requests for information as Pruitt's EPA has done to Democrats, Whitehouse told ME. "Basically, the fossil fuel industry has sent a raiding party into EPA and taken it over," the Rhode Island Democrat said. "I think he feels a kind of immunity from any kind of accountability because the fossil fuel industry so owns the Republican Party and so owns him."

JUDGE, IRKED BY DOJ, LETS KIDS CLIMATE CASE GO TO TRIAL: A federal judge on Thursday slammed the Justice Department for trying to force her hand on a legal matter in the lawsuit brought by children seeking to compel sweeping federal action on greenhouse gas emissions. The Trump administration had asked Judge Ann Aiken of the U.S. District Court in Oregon to let them appeal her decision not to dismiss the lawsuit before moving into the discovery phase. In a short order, Aiken criticized DOJ for threatening to go to the 9th Circuit anyway by today if she hadn't already ruled on the request, noting that the suit is already on an expedited schedule. She said the government's arguments were too weak to secure even faster consideration, and panned DOJ because it asked for a rapid decision after waiting four months to make its initial request. Aiken also gave the green light to move closer to the trial phase. The Trump administration could still try to get the 9th Circuit involved, but the appellate court is unlikely to intervene in an ongoing case.

BIPARTISAN BILL PASSES SENATE: Senators passed Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver Act (S. 826) by voice vote Thursday. The legislation, co-sponsored by Chairman John Barrasso and Carper, would reauthorize funding for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in which the Interior partnerships with private landowners in fighting invasive species and offer rewards for innovative technologies to stop invasive species. The bill cleared committee in April.

TROLL SO HARD: French President Emmanuel Macron poked Trump again Thursday by

launching a website urging anyone concerned with climate change to move to France, POLITICO Europe's Nicholas Vinocur [reports](#). The website — www.MakeOurPlanetGreatAgain.fr — plays on Trump's campaign slogan and invites researchers, entrepreneurs and NGO workers from around the world to state their interest in climate change and their specialist field, then apply for positions and immigration documents to come to France.

ANOTHER BOLD PROMISE: Did everyone remember it's the White House's Infrastructure Week? Well, Vice President Mike Pence certainly did, and told a working luncheon Thursday that Trump intended to speed up the approval of new projects. "We'll revolutionize federal permitting and review with the goal of reducing wait times from 10 years to two years," he said.

ENERGY PRIORITIES OUTLINED FOR NAFTA: A bipartisan group of eight senators has outlined specific "principles" that the Trump administration should consider when it renegotiates NAFTA, Pro Trade's Adam Behsudi [reports](#). "NAFTA has played a key role in all North American energy markets including electricity, renewable, oil, and natural gas, as each market is highly integrated with and remains dependent on vital energy infrastructure and trade crossings that border the United States, Canada, and Mexico," they wrote in a [letter](#) organized by Sen. [John Cornyn](#).

EPA UNION DEMANDS GUVS FIGHT FOR GREAT LAKES: The union representing some 1,000 EPA employees has asked to meet with six Midwest governors — Mark Dayton of Minnesota, Eric Holcomb of Indiana, John Kasich of Ohio, Bruce Rauner of Illinois, Rick Snyder of Michigan and Scott Walker of Wisconsin — to strongly oppose proposed budget cuts to the agency that they warn would severely impact the Great Lakes. "Aside from the long term health and safety of the public in the Great Lakes region, the economic threats to the region must be recognized," Michael Mikulka, president of Local 704 of the American Federation of Government Employees, said in a statement.

THEY'RE FIRED UP: Green groups are burning up over the Forest Service's [proposal](#) this week to expand two coal leases inside Colorado national forests. Local and national green groups are bristling at the plan to bulldoze wilderness for several new miles of roads and build new drilling pads for methane vents in an area home to black bears, elk and lynx. "Giving away our western public lands to the coal industry isn't energy independence, it's a scheme to make executives and shareholders rich at our expense," said Shannon Hughes of WildEarth Guardians. A 45-day public comment period ends July 24; if approved, the next step is a second approval from the Bureau of Land Management.

SOMETHING SYMBOLIC HERE: California Gov. Jerry Brown and Energy Secretary (and former Texas governor) Rick Perry shaking hands while going opposite directions on an escalator during a trip to China. [Pic](#).

REPORT: EPA DIDN'T UPDATE POLICIES AS REQUIRED: The GAO released a report Thursday finding EPA failed to update the agency's policy statement for the Science Advisory Board as required under a congressional spending bill, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). "EPA did not update its policies or requirements for the SAB as directed by the explanatory statement," it said.

REPORT: CLEAN ENERGY'S DIRTY SECRET: America Rising Squared is out with a [new white paper](#) arguing there are "great human and environmental costs" behind the production of clean energy technologies like solar panels, wind turbines, electric vehicles and EV batteries. "The inconvenient truth is that these 'clean' sources of energy are produced under the worst of labor and environmental rights violations," it says.

DEMOCRATIC REPORT: ENERGY EFFICIENCY EFFICIENTLY CREATES JOBS:

Democrats on the Joint Economic Committee, a congressional economic advisory committee formed in 1946, are out with a [report](#) today arguing for the job-creating capacity of energy efficiency measures. The report notes that EE jobs bounced up to 2.2 million in 2016, 7 percent increase from the previous year. The report calls on Congress to fully fund the Energy Star program, scheduled to be eliminated under Trump's budget, and in additional research.

AD WATCH: 15 PERCENT ETHANOL ALERT: Growth energy is launching a seven-figure [TV](#) and digital ad buy in D.C. and other markets to promote Sen. [Deb Fischer](#)'s bill to allow year-round sale of 15 percent ethanol fuel. The bill is set to get a hearing at EPW next week.

MOVER, SHAKER! Former House Speaker John Boehner has joined Arizona Mining Inc.'s board of directors (h/t POLITICO Influence).

QUICK HITS

- Digging the Graveyard of Oil's Past. [New York Times](#).
- Merkel in Argentina talks Trump, trade and climate change. [AP](#).
- Canada invites Chinese investment in oil sands: minister. [Reuters](#).
- As Oil Plumbs New Depths, Someone Sees \$80 a Barrel by December. [Bloomberg](#).
- As Trump's EPA delays smog rules, California vows to forge ahead. [Los Angeles Times](#).
- Qatar Gulf row roils LNG market, Shell tanker diverted. [Reuters](#).

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/pruitts-approach-to-epa-panned-by-former-chiefs-023224>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Pruitt's predecessors pan EPA 'originalism' philosophy [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/09/2017 05:00 AM EDT

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt is sounding one theme as he pushes to erase the agency's regulations and shrink its workforce: EPA is returning to its roots.

To Pruitt, that means helping states and cities clean up their toxic waste sites and provide safe drinking water — while rejecting the Obama administration's expansion into issues like climate change. He calls it a "Back to Basics" agenda, aimed at bringing EPA "back to the core of what we do as an agency."

But Pruitt's brand of "EPA originalism" has one big problem: His predecessors say he's got it wrong.

Past EPA administrators from both parties, as well as the GOP author of EPA's landmark environmental laws, say the agency's mission is far broader than the cramped version he's promoting, and has been designed by Congress to take new environmental issues into account.

"I don't personally think you can say, 'I'm somehow going back to what the basic responsibilities of EPA are,'" said Lee Thomas, who led the agency during Ronald Reagan's second term. "That's not what EPA is, that's not where the laws are and that's not where the risk is."

That mission began with a 1970 order from President Richard Nixon, calling for the creation of a single federal agency that would help keep the planet "a place both habitable by and hospitable to man."

Christine Todd Whitman, George W. Bush's first EPA administrator, said Pruitt appears to have jettisoned the agency's responsibility as a protector of human health when regulations impose costs on businesses. She also disputes his decision to focus on a limited set of EPA programs, such as the toxic-waste programs it carries out under the 1980 Superfund law.

"I don't think it has to be an either-or, nor should it be," Whitman said, adding: "Superfund is not the only issue for human health. Water pollution is a huge issue and very important and you need to work on it, but it's not the only issue. Air is an issue too. Even if you don't want to believe in climate change, you've got to believe that carbon and mercury are not good for you."

The tension highlights the dispute over EPA's role, particularly as environmental threats evolve beyond the mid-20th century crises of burning rivers and smog-choked cities into the long-term global menace of climate change. Admirers say Pruitt's approach makes him an "EPA originalist," in the words of Wall Street Journal columnist Kimberley Strassel — much like some conservative judges who argue for hewing to the Founders' original intent when interpreting the Constitution.

So far, Pruitt has launched rollbacks of former President Barack Obama's greenhouse gas rules for power plants, delayed deadlines for polluters and slowed agency work on new regulations, and most recently helped persuade President Donald Trump to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement.

EPA did not make Pruitt available for an interview, but he told Strassel that his aim is for EPA to achieve "tangible" results through "a restoration of its priorities," such as cleaning up the nation's 1,300 Superfund sites.

"These are issues that go directly to the health of our citizens that should be the absolute focus of this agency," Pruitt told the Journal. "This president is a fixer, he's an action-oriented leader, and a refocused EPA is in a great position to get results."

Trump has endorsed that vision as well. "We're going to have clean, beautiful air — clean, beautiful, crystal water," he said in a speech Wednesday in Cincinnati, Ohio, about his infrastructure priorities. "But you're going to have your jobs also."

On the other hand, Trump's proposed 2018 budget, which seeks to chop EPA's spending by 31 percent, has also called for slashing the same toxic-waste and clean-water programs that Pruitt has put at the center of the agency's mission.

The EPA administrator can have huge influence over the direction of the agency, but its scope and responsibilities are set out by Congress in laws like the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act.

Pruitt has prioritized a different focus for EPA: economic concerns, which he has cited in rolling back regulations on climate change, air pollution and clean water, even in cases where the Supreme Court has said costs cannot factor into the regulation.

Thomas Jorling, the Senate Republican staffer who co-authored the Clean Air Act in 1970 and the Clean Water Act in 1972, said that Pruitt's philosophy of "EPA originalism" is just wrong.

Pruitt cannot be a "tinhorn dictator" who decides which laws to avoid "in favor of economic development," said Jorling, who filed a court brief last year defending the Obama EPA's landmark climate regulation. Continuing to stick to a limited set of cherry-picked priorities Pruitt has chosen to champion is "just disingenuous," he added.

"It's all basically a smokescreen to their real intention, which is kind of a moral and ethical corruption, to ... restore the dependence of the United States energy system on fossil fuels," he said.

Pruitt maintains that his Obama-era predecessors, such as Gina McCarthy, vastly overstepped EPA's authority by issuing regulations such as the carbon dioxide limits in its climate regulations for power plants. Pruitt previously made that argument while waging legal fights against the agency's regulations when he was Oklahoma attorney general.

Pruitt said last month that he has not yet decided whether to craft new climate rules after repealing the Obama versions.

But his Republican critics say it's wrong to reject climate change as an EPA priority, even if there's room for debate on the details of Obama's actions. The Supreme Court has ruled that EPA must regulate greenhouse gases if they threaten human health and welfare, and the agency has

concluded they do.

States say Superfund sites are big issues in their communities, said Thomas, but the risks of climate change are "significantly higher."

"There's a lot more uncertainty around [global warming], but that doesn't mean you don't deal with it," he said.

Meanwhile, the rollbacks under Pruitt's "EPA originalism" campaign go well beyond climate change. Pruitt has ordered a rewrite of the Obama-era Waters of the U.S. rule, a sweeping regulation that sought to define which waterways and wetlands fall under the federal government's purview. And he remains critical of the Obama administration's efforts to tighten smog standards when much of the country has yet to meet previous limits — even though the Clean Air Act says EPA is supposed to base those decisions solely on the latest health science.

In addition, Pruitt has said his philosophy will involve fewer instances of the federal government overriding state cleanup plans it deems insufficient. And he says EPA will use fewer consent decrees — settlements negotiated with companies that have violated regulations — a practice Republicans have long criticized as "regulation by litigation."

Instead, Pruitt aims to focus on the Superfund program, cleanups of polluted "brownfields" and drinking water infrastructure, all of which involve economic development. He has also placed an emphasis on implementing last year's bipartisan chemical safety reforms, especially the process that approves new chemicals for use in products.

Myron Ebell, a longtime critic of climate change science and the Trump administration's transition leader for EPA, supports Pruitt's originalism mission because it dials back the agency's reach.

"It seems to me EPA has fairly clear statutory responsibilities under a number of statutes, and those statutory responsibilities should come first," said Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and the Environment.

"But over time and particularly in the Obama administration, they have taken on a whole lot of things which are entirely discretionary, that they don't have to do, they're not required by law to do it, but they decided to do it anyway," Ebell added.

Jorling said he and Leon Billings, his late Democratic counterpart in writing the laws, believed that the environmental statutes they wrote were not static, despite what critics like Ebell contend. Instead, they were designed to adapt to new situations.

"It's a complete misreading of those statutes and it really denigrates the senators and members of Congress that I worked for and with at the time," he said. "They were very concerned that you don't just write a statute for the past, you write a statute for the future."

Georgetown environmental law professor William Buzbee agreed that the legislative history of

environmental laws shows they were "not written to be frozen in time, but to give EPA important protective roles that will evolve in light of improved science and understanding of emerging risks."

For example, the Clean Air Act included a catch-all provision, Section 111, that allowed the agency to address newly discovered pollutants not covered elsewhere in the law. EPA used that provision just five times over the decades, mostly on obscure pollutants, before the Obama administration wielded it to target carbon dioxide from power plants.

McCarthy, Pruitt's immediate predecessor, said it's "crazy" to believe EPA's role was not intended to evolve to include new problems like climate change.

"I know that a lot of this language about 'EPA originalism' is really just an excuse ... for disempowering the agency, particularly as it relates to climate change," she said.

"Is EPA supposed to respond and say, 'We're really busy cleaning up Superfund sites from the '60s. We really can't address the problems that you're facing today?'" McCarthy added. "Is that what they're really suggesting? And as long as we catch up with the damage that was in place when these laws came in, that we'll have done our job? That doesn't make any sense."

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Carper has asked Barrasso to reconfirm Svinicki solo [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/08/2017 03:31 PM EDT

A Senate Democrat said today that he's asked Republicans to split up the confirmations of Nuclear Regulatory Commission nominees in order to fast track the reappointment of Kristine Svinicki.

Sen. [Tom Carper](#), the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, told reporters that he supports Svinicki's renomination and pitched to EPW Chairman [John Barrasso](#) that she get confirmed while the panel reviews the other two Republican nominees.

"She's been through several times, so it shouldn't be too heavy a lift," the Delaware Democrat said.

Carper said the other nominees, Annie Caputo and David Wright, could be packaged with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

"One of the things I've suggested to Chairman Barrasso is to find a way to pair those two maybe with one Democrat, and there's a Democrat on the NRC whose term expires ... next year," Carper said. "The idea of going ahead and moving his renomination along with a couple of Republicans

would be of interest to me."

Repackaging the two new GOP nominees with Baran would mean "we wouldn't have to do them, like, next week," Carper said.

Svinicki, who has been an NRC commissioner for nine years, was elevated to the agency's chairmanship by Trump in January. But she's facing a time crunch and would have to step down, even temporarily, if the Senate fails to confirm her for another five-year term by June 30.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has scheduled a nomination hearing to review all three GOP NRC nominees on June 13.

To view online [click here](#).

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Bipartisan group of senators outlines energy priorities for NAFTA [Back](#)

By Adam Behsudi | 06/08/2017 05:46 PM EDT

A bipartisan group of senators with major energy interests in their states have submitted a list of specific "principles" that the Trump administration should consider when it renegotiates NAFTA.

"NAFTA has played a key role in all North American energy markets including electricity, renewable, oil, and natural gas, as each market is highly integrated with and remains dependent on vital energy infrastructure and trade crossings that border the United States, Canada, and Mexico," eight lawmakers wrote in a [letter](#) organized by Sen. [John Cornyn](#) (R-Texas).

The senators, in their letter to U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, set out eight points that should be considered "to protect American energy consumers and producers and enhance U.S. energy security."

First on the list is a demand that any revised deal allow for the free flow of electricity, oil, natural gas, refined products, petrochemicals and other energy-intensive manufactured goods. Among other things, the lawmakers also want zero tariffs on all energy products; competitive and transparent bidding for licenses; investor protections; and product-specific rules to allow the use of diluent, a lubricant added to crude oil for pipeline transit of oil.

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GAO says EPA falls short on advisory board policy [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/08/2017 03:40 PM EDT

EPA fell short on recent orders from Congress to update the agency's policy statement for the Science Advisory Board, according to a report issued today by the Government Accountability Office.

A spending bill passed in 2015 directed EPA to ensure its SAB policy included a way to evaluate bias if the administrator wants "financial-related metrics" to "identify conflicts of interest or bias." EPA critics have long complained that SAB and other advisory panels are weighted toward researchers who receive research grants from the federal government.

The spending bill also directed EPA to study ways of increasing state membership and methods for considering public comment.

However, GAO says EPA fell short on all counts. "EPA did not update its policies or requirements for the SAB as directed by the explanatory statement," the report said.

A draft document did not delve into the financial metrics because agency staff use the "existing legal and policy framework," including Office of Government Ethics rules. The other directives also came up short, and the agency has yet to finalize the document, GAO said.

While the report made no recommendations before the guidance is finalized, GAO said EPA should keep the criticisms in mind.

Administrator Scott Pruitt made waves last month when he declined to re-appoint nine members of the Board of Scientific Counselors, a separate entity from SAB that advises EPA on research issues. Observers also say EPA is behind on finding a new chair for the seven-member Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Molly Block[Molly.Block@mail.house.gov]
From: Jackie Toth
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:42:53 PM
Subject: Q re: Definers contract

Hi all,

Can we get confirmation that the EPA canceled the Definers contract? When will Definers' services be fully terminated? Does the EPA intend to issue a replacement contract, and will it be opened to a bid?

Deadline's no later than 3:30pm today, if possible.

Thanks much,
Jackie

Jackie Toth
CQ Legal
Energy & Environment Reporter/Analyst
O: 202-650-6518
C: 610-428-2276
@JackieTothDC

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Fri 11/17/2017 8:07:12 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Fritts launches new firm — Former Podesta Group principal joins VantageKnight — Akin Gump signs 5

By Theodoric Meyer | 11/17/2017 03:05 PM EDT

With David Beavers and Aubree Eliza Weaver

FRITTS' NEW FIRM IS OFF THE GROUND: Kimberley Fritts, the Podesta Group's longtime chief executive, has launched a new firm a week after quitting the Podesta Group, **POLITICO's Theodoric Meyer** reports. "Many of the Podesta Group's top lobbyists are following Fritts to the new firm, **Cogent Strategies**, along with at least 15 clients, according to a person familiar with the firm's plans. ... The new firm is expected to retain the Podesta Group's wide range of lobbying, with a focus on technology, financial services and energy work, according to the person familiar with the firm's plans. The firm will do foreign lobbying, public relations and digital work, too."

- "About 40 percent of the roughly 60 staffers who worked at the Podesta Group last month are heading to Cogent, including 18 of the Podesta Group's 27 principals and all four of its senior vice presidents." According to the firm's website, the former Podesta Group principals joining the new firm include **David Adams, John Anderson, Erin Billings, Peggy Binzel, Jim Dyer, Randall Gerard, Josh Holly, Beth Inadomi, Claudia James, Andrew Kauders, Lauren Maddox, Kevin McLaughlin, Elizabeth Morra, Mike Quaranta, Oscar Ramirez, Javier Sancho, Missi Tessier and Dana Thompson. Hastie Afkhami, Katie Beck, Will Bohlen and Emily Flynn Pappas**, who were senior vice president at the Podesta Group, and **Shellie Purvis**, who was a vice president, round out the team. [Full story](#).

FORMER PODESTA PRINCIPAL JOINS VANTAGEKNIGHT: **Cristina Antelo**, a former Podesta Group principal, has joined **VantageKnight**, the boutique lobbying shop started last year by **Manny Ortiz**, a former **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck** lobbyist. She'll be the firm's chief executive. **Lucia Alonzo**, a former Podesta Group director, is coming with her, bringing VantageKnight's head count to four, along with **Olga DeMetri**, a former **LEVICK** vice president. Antelo will bring some of her Podesta Group clients with her, including the **Brooks Development Authority** and **Perceptics**.

- Antelo had considered starting her own firm, she said in an interview, but ultimately decided to partner with Ortiz. Both of them are Democrats. "By teaming up, we're really going to be able to take advantage of what's coming in 2018," Antelo said, adding that the firm is open to adding a Republican partner if it can find the right fit. Other Podesta Group principals who haven't joined Fritts' new firm include **Josh Lahey** and **Paul Brathwaite**, both of whom are starting their own firms, Lahey with the former Senate staffer **Colin Hayes**.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Tips: tmeyer@politico.com. Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

New for Pros! The Pro app brings real-time policy intelligence and customizable notifications to

your smartphone and tablet. [Download the Pro app for iPhone and iPad](#) | [Get the Pro app on Google Play](#)

AKIN GUMP SIGNS FIVE: Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld has added five new clients: **21c Museum Hotels, Arista Networks Inc., Frontera Resources Corporation, Houchens Industries** and **TerreStar Corporation**. The most interesting of the bunch is probably Frontera Resources, an oil and gas company headquartered in Houston looking to resolve "energy exploration disputes" with the Republic of Georgia. Akin Gump's **Matt Hawkins**, a former aide to **Reince Priebus** when he was **Republican National Committee** chairman, will lobby for the company on a [resolution](#) introduced by Rep. **Ted Poe** (R-Texas) last month backing NATO membership for Georgia and calling "for the end of Russia's occupation of Georgian sovereign territory," among other things.

TAX REFORM KEEPS ON GIVING: Marc Gerson and Rocco Femia of **Miller & Chevalier** will lobby for **Accenture** on tax reform. And **K&L Gates** has signed the **Coalition for Energy Efficient Jobs & Investment**, which is fighting to keep Congress from axing an energy efficiency tax deduction that the **American Institute of Architects** and others are lobbying to save, too. "Members of the coalition believe this is a really critical provision that encourages capital investment and job growth," said **Karishma Shah Page**, one of the K&L Gates lobbyists working for the coalition.

IT'S A GOOD TIME TO BE A FARA LAWYER: Vice News' **Christina Sterbenz** and **Alex Thompson** report that lawyers who specialize in Foreign Agents Registration Act work have seen their business boom since the indictment of **Paul Manafort** and his deputy, **Rick Gates**, on charges of violating foreign lobbying law. "'The firm's phone has been ringing off the hook,' [Ron Oleynik, who leads **Holland & Knight's** international trade practice,] said. 'We've had literally a dozen or more new clients or potential clients. We don't see a dozen in a year.' **Joshua Rosenstein**, a partner at D.C. political law firm **Sandler, Reiff, Lamb, Rosenstein & Birkenstock**, also experienced what he called a 'definite uptick': around 10 new or existing clients inquiring about FARA." [Full story](#).

RAILROADS, AUTOMAKERS URGE TRUMP NOT TO TORPEDO NAFTA: **Mitch Bainwol**, the president and chief executive of the **Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers**, and **Edward Hamberger**, the chief executive of the **Association of American Railroads**, have an op-ed on **Fox News'** website warning President **Donald Trump** of the consequences of scrapping NAFTA. "Should NAFTA die, eager foreign competitors will be ready to pick up the pieces and welcome even more North American manufacturers to relocate, to lower their costs of doing business," [they write](#). "The Trump administration admirably seeks [to bolster U.S. manufacturing](#), but if it scuttles NAFTA more companies would flee our country, as a curtain of tariffs would fall across North America, raising the cost of doing business."

AT&T HIRES FORMER LAWYER FOR TRUMP: "AT&T has hired attorney **Daniel Petrocelli**, who once represented President **Donald Trump**, in preparation for a potential legal battle with the [Justice Department] over the company's mega-merger with **Time Warner**, an AT&T spokesman confirmed to **POLITICO**," **POLITICO's Steven Overly** reports. "Based in Los Angeles, Petrocelli currently leads the trial practice at **O'Melveny and Myers**. He [defended](#)

the president in the lawsuits over the **Trump University** real estate seminar program." [Full story.](#)

JOBS REPORT:

- **Brian Forest**, Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#)'s chief speechwriter, is leaving the Hill to join the **National Association of Manufacturers** as director of strategic messaging. He'll work closely with **Chrys Kefalas**, the association's vice president for brand strategy.

- **Erica Donovan** has joined **Expedia**'s government relations team as a public affairs specialist. She previously worked on strategic partnerships and campaign management at **POLITICO**.

SPOTTED: At an off-the-record dinner last night at **Jamie Weinstein** and **Michelle Fields**' place at the Ritz-Carlton, according to a PI tipster: **Charles Rivkin**, the chief executive of the **Motion Picture Association of America**; **McKay Coppins** of **The Atlantic**; **Josh Rogin** of **The Washington Post**; **Kaitlan Collins** of **CNN**; **Ben Haddad** of the **Hudson Institute**; and **Ali Rogin** of **ABC News**.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

None

NEW PACs:

Hold Washington Accountable (Super PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: 21 c Museum Hotels
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Arista Networks Inc.
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Frontera Resources Corporation
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Houchens Industries
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: TerreStar Corporation
Baker & Hostetler LLP: Ripple Labs, Inc.
Bold Strategies, LLC: Hornbeck Offshore Services, Inc.
Cepi-U.S.: CEPI Norway
Fierce Government Relations: International Paper Company
First Principles Strategies, LLC: Squire Patton Boggs on behalf of Molnlycke Health Care US, LLC
Groom Law Group, Chartered: Retirement Clearinghouse
Hannegan Landau Poersch & Rosenbaum Advocacy, LLC: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Jenkins Hill Consulting, LLC: Associated Behavioral Health Care
K&L Gates LLP: Coalition for Energy Efficient Jobs & Investment
McAllister & Quinn, LLC: National Children's Alliance
Miller & Chevalier, Chtd: Accenture, LLP

Monument Policy Group, LLC: iUNU Inc.
The Madison Group: The Jewish Federations of North America
The Nickles Group, LLC: Send Relief, Inc.

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

3 Click Solutions, LLC: Progressive Financial Services, Inc.
Capitol Counsel, LLC: Coalition to Protect Access to Care
CMS Consulting Services Inc.: Energy Industries Of Ohio
Ms. Karen Johnson: The Essilor Vision Foundation on behalf of Potomac Strategic Development

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To: Skolnik, Samuel[sskolnik@bgov.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 7:07:42 PM
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:07 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Skolnik, Samuel [<mailto:sskolnik@bgov.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:42 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Hi Jahan –

I just sent the following email to press@epa.gov, but wanted to make sure I got some kind of response today. My questions are regarding Definers Corp.

Any help appreciated,

Sam

--

Hi all. I cover federal contracting and procurement issues for Bloomberg Government, and am working on a daily story based off of reports that EPA today has dropped the contract with Definers Corp. to help the EPA shape press coverage of the agency, through a no-bid contract.

Questions:

1 – Why did EPA drop the Definers contract?

2 – Why was this a sole-source solicitation in the first place?

3 – How did EPA decide to solicit the work from Definers Corp. specifically?

4 – What did EPA need to do to justify this as a sole-source solicitation? Did the agency do what it needed to, to abide the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other pertinent laws? What exactly was that?

5 – Does EPA believe there are inherent risks to agencies, and by extension taxpayers, in no-bid contracts? If so, what are they?

I'm looking for comment (or EPA's written thoughts, attributable to Jahan Wilcox or whoever the right person might be) by 4 p.m. today. My contact info is below.

Thank you,

Sam

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

Direct: (202) 416-3328

Cell: (702) 755-5729 *(On Fridays, please call my Cell)*

sskolnik@bgov.com

@samskolnik

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Mon 10/23/2017 1:43:53 PM
Subject: FOR APPROVAL: EPA Morning News Highlights 10.23.17

EPA Morning News Highlights 10.19.17

-

The Daily Signal: EPA Chief Set To Bar Government-Funded Experts From Agency's Science Panels

Try asking the nation's top environmental protection official to "describe the shortcomings of the scientific evidence for climate change," and what type of data he might find persuasive on the subject. You might shake loose news of major policy changes designed to end what President Donald Trump's team sees as potential conflicts of interest that undermine the value of scientific advice to the government agency. That opportunity came Tuesday for an audience member during The Heritage Foundation's annual President's Club meeting in Washington, where Scott Pruitt, the former Oklahoma attorney general who now heads up the Environmental Protection Agency, took on that question. Pruitt revealed that he will issue a directive aimed at ensuring the "independence, transparency, and objectivity" of experts who serve on the agency's scientific advisory boards. He suggested he may rule out science advisers with a history of taking EPA grants, sometimes "to the tune of literally tens of millions of dollars."

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Breitbart: Scott Pruitt: Meeting With Stakeholders Right Approach For Creating Good Environmental Policy

The media is reporting that Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt has been meeting with "polluters," including fossil fuel leaders, ranchers, and farmers. Pruitt is also being accused of dismantling the good works of his predecessors in secrecy, mistreating employees at the agency and even covertly meeting with groups that have faced burdensome regulation under the President Barack Obama administration.

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The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review: Trib Editorial: An End To EPA's 'Sue & Settle'

The days of special interests potentially forcing policies from the Environmental Protection Agency through a process known as "sue and settle" are over. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has issued guidelines that preclude any regulatory tinkering under the guise of lawsuit settlements or backdoor deals that limit public comment and/or hamstringing the agency's due diligence. "We will no longer go behind closed doors and use consent decrees and settlement

agreements to resolve lawsuits filed against the agency by special-interest groups where doing so would circumvent the regulatory process set forth by Congress,” Mr. Pruitt said. The Obama administration has denied imposing any illegal regulations originating from EPA settlements with environmental groups. Pruitt's directive simply closes the door to any questionable agreements in the future.

-

The Washington Examiner: Trump Administration Wants To Cut Biofuels, Raising Big Worries In Transportation Industry

Parts of the transportation industry are worried that a Trump administration proposal to reduce the amount of biofuels blended into the nation's fuel supply will drive up prices. Convenience store owners and truck stop operators, who interact directly with the users of fuel, say they have plenty at stake if the Renewable Fuel Standard were weakened. "At a high level, truck stops play an integral role in the functioning of the Renewable Fuel Standard, because biodiesel is the most critical renewable fuel source under the program and most biodiesel is sold at truck stops," said David Fialkov, vice president of government relations at the National Association of Truck Stop Owners. "The Renewable Fuel Standard should allow us to incorporate renewable fuel into supply in a manner that allows us to lower the price charged to customers for fuel." The Renewable Fuel Standard, a law passed in 2005 under President George W. Bush to promote renewable fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel, requires a certain amount of biofuels to be blended into the nation's fuel supply. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has proposed targets for 2017 and 2018 that are slightly below current levels after oil companies complained about the costs of blending ethanol and other biofuels.

-

The Saint Louis American: EPA Plans To Conduct Further Testing For Radioactive Waste At West Lake Landfill

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to conduct further testing for radioactive contamination at the West Lake Landfill Superfund site in Bridgeton. Albert Kelly, senior adviser to EPA administrator Scott Pruitt and the head of the agency's Superfund Task Force, made the announcement at a forum late Thursday, where members of the community voiced concerns about the landfill. Kelly said he expects the sampling to occur within the next 90 days in the western part of the site, a portion that agency officials often refer to as "Operating Unit 2." The announcement came as good news to area residents, who have long worried that that contamination has damaged their health. EPA officials say they are confident that they know the extent of radioactive waste at the West Lake Landfill. Based on aerial photographs and other data that has tracked the movement of the waste, the EPA had previously stated that it would not conduct more testing. But Kelly said Thursday that the EPA is willing to do so to ensure that it has enough information to allay residents' fears.

-

The Wall Street Journal: Trump Caves On Ethanol

The bipartisan pull of corporate welfare—also known as the swamp—is powerful. Last week it swallowed up no less than Donald Trump and his fearless Environmental Protection Agency administrator, Scott Pruitt. They caved under pressure from the ethanol lobby and political extortion from Republican Senators Joni Ernst, Deb Fischer and Chuck Grassley. Mr. Pruitt announced Thursday that EPA won't reduce its proposed 19.24 billion gallon biofuels quota for 2018, and may even increase it. The EPA will further consider giving biofuels a pass to pollute that no other industry enjoys, via what's known as a Reid Vapor Pressure waiver for high-ethanol blends. As bad, the EPA announced it will keep intact a compliance credit scheme that benefits global and integrated oil companies and ethanol producers at the expense of smaller independent refiners and manufacturers. "Renewable identification numbers," or RINs, are a credit created each time a gallon of ethanol is mixed with fuel. The EPA requires refiners to use RINs as proof of compliance with biofuel standards, and credits can be bought or sold. Mr. Trump rode to office promising to drain the swamp and win negotiations on behalf of the American people. But for all of that reform rhetoric, his EPA is now capitulating to one of Washington's worst examples of welfare for big business. By showing weakness, the Trump Administration invites further special-interest shakedowns.

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National Morning News Highlights 10.19.17

NBC News: Mueller Now Investigating Democratic Lobbyist Tony Podesta

Tony Podesta and the Podesta Group are now the subjects of a federal investigation being led by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, three sources with knowledge of the matter told NBC News. The probe of Podesta and his Democratic-leaning lobbying firm grew out of Mueller's inquiry into the finances of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to the sources. As special counsel, Mueller has been tasked with investigating possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. Manafort had organized a public relations campaign for a non-profit called the European Centre for a Modern Ukraine (ECMU). Podesta's company was one of many firms that worked on the campaign, which promoted Ukraine's image in the West. The sources said the investigation into Podesta and his company began as more of a fact-finding mission about the ECMU and Manafort's role in the campaign, but has now morphed into a criminal inquiry into whether the firm violated the Foreign Agents Registration Act, known as FARA.

The Washington Post: National Democrats Are Jittery About Va. Governor's Race

The Democratic National Committee gathered here over the past week with one worry on every activist's mind: We'd better not lose the Virginia governor's race. It's a surprising case of the

jitters over a place that hasn't elected a Republican to statewide office in eight years — and that voted resoundingly against Donald Trump last year. But nationally, Democrats haven't won a marquee race since losing the presidency. They lag Republicans in fundraising. A loss for Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam against Republican Ed Gillespie on Nov. 7 could stir doubts about message and strategy just as the party is gearing up nationally for next year's all-important midterm elections. "We're Ground Zero," Susan Swecker, chairwoman of the Democratic Party of Virginia, said inside the Bally's casino here, where party leaders and activists from all 57 states and territories gathered over the past few days. "All eyes are on us. I can understand that, because last year broke my heart." Less clear is whether the jitters will help — or whether a Northam victory gives Democrats any kind of road map for 2018. Leaders and activists spent a lot of time in Las Vegas talking about Nevada and Virginia, two increasingly urban and diverse states that bucked 2016's Trump wave, as models for what every state party could achieve if they organized and elevated their activist base.

The Wall Street Journal: Trump Says 'No Change' To 401(K) Plans Under Forthcoming Tax Proposal

President Donald Trump on Monday morning vowed a popular retirement savings program would remain untouched in the forthcoming Republican tax overhaul proposal. Democratic opponents of the Republican tax plan have said it would favor the wealthiest Americans. In pledging to protect up front tax breaks for the retirement program known as 401(k), Mr. Trump seems intent on rebutting that argument and giving the tax plan a populist hue. "There will be NO change to your 401(k)," the president wrote on Twitter. "This has always been a great and popular middle class tax break that works, and it stays!" Congressional Republicans who are crafting a tax overhaul proposal are looking for ways to generate revenue to support broad reductions in individual tax rates.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Daily Signal

<http://dailysignal.com/2017/10/22/epa-chief-set-bar-government-funded-experts-agencys-science-panels/>

EPA Chief Set To Bar Government-Funded Experts From Agency's Science Panels

By Kevin Mooney, 10/22/17

Try asking the nation's top environmental protection official to "describe the shortcomings of the scientific evidence for climate change," and what type of data he might find persuasive on the subject.

You might shake loose news of major policy changes designed to end what President Donald Trump's team sees as potential conflicts of interest that undermine the value of scientific advice to the government agency.

That opportunity came Tuesday for an audience member during The Heritage Foundation's annual President's Club meeting in Washington, where Scott Pruitt, the former Oklahoma attorney general who now heads up the Environmental Protection Agency, took on that question.

Pruitt revealed that he will issue a directive aimed at ensuring the "independence, transparency, and objectivity" of experts who serve on the agency's scientific advisory boards. He suggested he may rule out science advisers with a history of taking EPA grants, sometimes "to the tune of literally tens of millions of dollars."

"I think what's most important at the agencies is to have scientific advisers who are objective, independent-minded, providing transparent recommendations to me as the administrator and to our office on the decisions that we're making on the efficacy of rules that we're passing to address environmental issues," Pruitt said, adding:

If we have individuals that are on those [scientific advisory] boards that are receiving money from the agency, sometimes going back years and years to the tune of literally tens of millions of dollars over time, that to me causes questions on the independence and the veracity of the transparency of the recommendations that are coming our way.

Pruitt specified the Science Advisory Board, the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, and the Board of Scientific Counselors as concerns during his interview at the Heritage event.

The EPA administrator did not spell out what would be in his directive, but he drew a parallel with the steps he already has taken to end the practice known as sue and settle.

Speaking at length on the topic, he said that sue and settle enabled federal agencies to “engage in rulemaking through the litigation process.” Critics have faulted the practice for permitting environmental advocacy groups to set regulatory policy without input from the public or Congress.

Pruitt’s expected directive could immediately affect the 47-member Science Advisory Board, which is charged with reviewing the quality of scientific information that underpins EPA regulations. The board also reviews EPA research programs and directly advises the administrator.

Terms for 15 members of the Science Advisory Board are set to expire, and the agency has published a list of 132 possible candidates for the open seats.

Some on the list have expressed skepticism in one form or another toward the idea that human activity is the primary driver of climate change, much to the consternation of certain environmental advocacy groups.

These candidates include Kevin Dayaratna, senior statistician at Heritage’s Center for Data Analysis; Craig Idso, senior fellow at Heartland Institute, a free-market think tank; and Paul Driessen, senior policy adviser at the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow, a libertarian environmental organization.

A report in The Washington Post on Pruitt’s interview at the Heritage event with Rob Bluey, editor-in-chief of The Daily Signal, quoted officials with the Natural Resources Defense Council and Union of Concerned Scientists who said the EPA administrator should apply the same standard concerning potential conflicts of interest to science advisers who receive funding from private corporate sources connected with the oil and gas industry.

But Steve Milloy, publisher of JunkScience.com, told The Daily Signal in an email that Pruitt’s pending directive is right on target.

“For too long, EPA has been able to purchase the ‘science’ it wants from grants-hungry researchers and their universities,” Milloy said, adding:

The EPA would then employ these same scientists to review their own work under the guise of peer review. This system is entirely corrupt if not illegal, as the applicable laws require the boards to be independent and unbiased. Congress has tried to fix this problem, but has been unable. It’s terrific that Scott Pruitt has recognized the seriousness of this problem and is now taking steps to fix it.

Contrary to the howling of the left, this is not a purge of any viewpoints. This is a first step in restoring the purpose of the science review boards—to provide EPA with the various views of experts vs. the rubber-stamping of the agency agenda by cronies. There are many more steps that need to be taken to right the science advisory panel ship at EPA, but this is an important first one.

William Yeatman, a senior fellow with the Washington-based Competitive Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, said he credits Pruitt for compelling the EPA to live up to its own standards. Yeatman cites reports from the agency’s own Office of Inspector General and from Congress, including:

—EPA has taken the position that receipt of government grants doesn’t constitute a financial conflict of interest. However, the agency’s own Peer Review Handbook states that grants can be a conflict of interest if the advisory board plans to address work performed under the research grant.

—Six of the seven members of the 2015 Clean Air Science Advisory Committee, appointed by President Barack Obama, received a total of \$119.2 million in EPA research grants, according to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. The panel, the most important of the science advisory boards, recommends national ambient air quality standards.

—The Obama administration’s prior clean air panel cited its own work more than 700 times, according to the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

“The data suggest that these grants do indeed raise a conflict of interest as EPA defines it,” Yeatman said in an email to The Daily Signal. “So I welcome this reform effort to bring integrity to the advice EPA receives from outside advisers. For better or for worse, there are other federal sources of funding for science (e.g., NSF or NIH). It just makes sense to have EPA comport with its own rules.”

His references were to the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.

During his interview with Bluey, Pruitt also offered up his own definition of environmentalism, in contrast to how he said it has been defined by contemporary advocacy groups:

True environmentalism from my perspective is using natural resources that God has blessed us with to feed the world, to power the world with the sensitivity that future generations cultivate, to harvest, to be respectful good stewards, good managers of our natural resources, to bequeath those natural resources for the next generation.

Breitbart

<http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2017/10/22/epa-meeting-stakeholders-right-approach-creating-good-environmental-policy/>

Scott Pruitt: Meeting With Stakeholders Right Approach For Creating Good Environmental Policy

By Penny Starr, 10/22/17

The media is reporting that Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt has been meeting with “polluters,” including fossil fuel leaders, ranchers, and farmers.

Pruitt is also being accused of dismantling the good works of his predecessors in secrecy, mistreating employees at the agency and even covertly meeting with groups that have faced

burdensome regulation under the President Barack Obama administration.

The New York Times reported:

A former Oklahoma attorney general who built his career suing the EPA, and whose LinkedIn profile still describes him as “a leading advocate against the EPA’s activist agenda,” Mr. Pruitt has made it clear that he sees his mission to be dismantling the agency’s policies — and even portions of the institution itself.

But as he works to roll back regulations, close offices and eliminate staff at the agency charged with protecting the nation’s environment and public health, Mr. Pruitt is taking extraordinary measures to conceal his actions, according to interviews with more than 20 current and former agency employees.

Together with a small group of political appointees, many with backgrounds, like his, in Oklahoma politics, and with advice from industry lobbyists, Mr. Pruitt has taken aim at an agency whose policies have been developed and enforced by thousands of the EPA’s career scientists and policy experts, many of whom work in the same building.

“There’s a feeling of paranoia in the agency — employees feel like there’s been a hostile takeover and the guy in charge is treating them like enemies,” Christopher Sellers, director of the Center for the Study of Inequality and Social Justice at Stony Brook University, said in the Times report. He conducted an interview survey with about 40 EPA employees, titled “The EPA Under Siege.”

But in an interview with Time magazine, Pruitt said he is meeting with “stakeholders” in the private sector that he is responsible for regulating as part of the agency’s mission to protect the environment and the health of Americans.

Pruitt said that the recent criticism of his schedule by the Times was unfounded.

“I don’t spend any time with polluters,” Pruitt said. “I prosecute polluters.”

“What I’m spending time with are stakeholders who care about outcomes,” Pruitt said. “I think it’s a wrong premise.”

“It’s Washington, DC—think to look at folks across the country—from states to citizens to farmers and ranchers, industry in general—and say they are evil or wrong and we’re not going to partner with them,” Pruitt said.

Pruitt also questioned the common conception of what it means to be an environmentalist and said that the term also applies to farmers and ranchers who live off the land.

“Those farmers and ranchers in Iowa or North Dakota, are they less of a conservationist or environmentalist because they’re not part of some association?” Pruitt asked. “I mean they are our first environmentalists.”

“Their greatest asset is their land,” Pruitt said.

Liz Bowman, a spokeswoman for the EPA, denied the accounts employees interviewed said about the secrecy surrounding Pruitt.

“None of this is true,” Bowman said. “It’s all rumors.”

In an e-mailed statement, Bowman said:

It’s very disappointing, yet not surprising, to learn that you would solicit leaks, and collude with union officials to distract from the work we are doing to implement the president’s agenda.

And those who admire the work Pruitt is doing have said he is justified in taking measures to ensure his security because many of the 15,000 employees in the agency are opposed to his policies.

“EPA is legendary for being stocked with leftists,” said Steven J. Milloy, a member of President Donald Trump’s EPA transition team and author of the book *Scare Pollution: Why and How to Fix the E.P.A.*

“If you work in a hostile environment, you’re not the one that’s paranoid,” Milloy said.

Sen. Thomas R. Carper (D-DE), the top Democrat on the committee overseeing federal government-related operations, has criticized Pruitt for embracing what he described as “a culture of secrecy around everything from his schedule to the way the agency makes scientific determinations,” according to the Times.

But an EPA spokesman pushed back against Carper’s criticisms.

“Administrator Pruitt has responded to 14 of the 27 oversight letters, which often contain numerous in-depth questions and it takes time to provide an extensive and thorough response,” the spokesman said.

The Times report also criticized Pruitt for spending less than one percent of his time with environmental groups.

The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

<http://triblive.com/opinion/editorials/12850517-74/trib-editorial-an-end-to-epas-sue-settle>

Trib Editorial: An End To EPA's 'Sue & Settle'

The Tribune-Review Editorial Board, 10/21/17

The days of special interests potentially forcing policies from the Environmental Protection Agency through a process known as “sue and settle” are over. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has issued guidelines that preclude any regulatory tinkering under the guise of lawsuit settlements or backdoor deals that limit public comment and/or hamstring the agency's due diligence.

“We will no longer go behind closed doors and use consent decrees and settlement agreements to resolve lawsuits filed against the agency by special-interest groups where doing so would circumvent the regulatory process set forth by Congress,” Mr. Pruitt said.

The Obama administration has denied imposing any illegal regulations originating from EPA settlements with environmental groups. Pruitt's directive simply closes the door to any questionable agreements in the future.

Under the new policy, the EPA will contact any state or entity affected when a lawsuit settlement or consent decree is under consideration. It also ensures that the EPA won't create any new regulations in the settlement process.

That's fair. And it should prompt other federal agencies that routinely face agenda-driven litigation to do the same.

Yet Pruitt's move drew rebukes from environmentalists, one of whom predicted that the EPA boss “will be spending a lot more of your taxpayer dollars defending his inaction in court.”

If need be, yes — but openly and without any nodding and winking.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-administration-wants-to-cut-biofuels-raising-big-worries-in-transportation-industry/article/2638062>

Trump Administration Wants To Cut Biofuels, Raising Big Worries In Transportation Industry

By Josh Siegel, 10/23/17

Parts of the transportation industry are worried that a Trump administration proposal to reduce the amount of biofuels blended into the nation's fuel supply will drive up prices.

Convenience store owners and truck stop operators, who interact directly with the users of fuel, say they have plenty at stake if the Renewable Fuel Standard were weakened.

"At a high level, truck stops play an integral role in the functioning of the Renewable Fuel Standard, because biodiesel is the most critical renewable fuel source under the program and most biodiesel is sold at truck stops," said David Fialkov, vice president of government relations at the National Association of Truck Stop Owners. "The Renewable Fuel Standard should allow us to incorporate renewable fuel into supply in a manner that allows us to lower the price charged to customers for fuel."

The Renewable Fuel Standard, a law passed in 2005 under President George W. Bush to promote renewable fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel, requires a certain amount of biofuels to be blended into the nation's fuel supply.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has proposed targets for 2017 and 2018 that are slightly below current levels after oil companies complained about the costs of blending ethanol and other biofuels.

Under the law, refiners must blend ethanol or other biofuels into their products or purchase credits, known as Renewable Identification Numbers, from refiners that do.

The prices of those credits, which had been stable, have jumped in recent years, which oil refiners say drive up pump prices for consumers.

The EPA, which must finalize the regulations by Nov. 30, is looking to cut the total renewable fuel requirement from 19.24 billion gallons under the proposed 2018 standard to 18.77 billion gallons for 2019, a 2.5 percent cut.

It proposed cutting the already established 2018 volumes of biodiesel, which was set at 2.1 billion gallons, by up to 315 million gallons, which would be 15 percent.

Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, and other Midwestern lawmakers have threatened to hold up President Trump's EPA nominees over the proposed cut, arguing the move would result in job losses for local farmers that produce the corn, soybeans and other agricultural components that go into the fuel.

Fialkov, the truck stop representative, and others working in the transportation industry, have different concerns.

Biodiesel is primarily used to fuel trucks, and Fialkov says the Renewable Fuel Standard has made the fuel cost competitive with traditional diesel.

"Lowering the renewable fuel mandates under the Renewable Fuel Standard would disincentivize many truck stop operators from blending biodiesel and selling biodiesel," Fialkov said. "For truck stop operators who are able to effectively blend and capture value associated with blending biofuels, they are able to sell fuel at a lower price, and that drives more volume. If the EPA discourages us from blending biodiesel in a manner that raises the price of fuel, invariably we will blend less biodiesel, which will raise the cost of fuel. Truckers will continue to drive, but just pay more."

The trucking industry, meanwhile, is not taking an official position on the proposal. Glen Kedzie

of the American Trucking Associations says his trade group is watching the debate closely.

The organization represents large companies such as UPS, FedEx, and Walmart, as well as smaller entities that use 20 trucks or less.

The nation's "3.5 million truck drivers in our industry want to make sure fuel is available to move trucks and can get products to shelves," Kedzie said. "We are very price sensitive to fuel. It's our lifeblood."

Kedzie says costs of biodiesel have been stable because of the EPA mandate, as truckers have come to rely on the fuel.

"We typically use consumer biodiesel, not by choice, but by requirement," Kedzie said. "If you are a fleet and have to refuel in a state with a strong mandate like Minnesota, Pennsylvania, or California, you are a captive audience on what you put in your tank. The costs are kept in check — or at least had been kept in check."

The trucking industry has small profit margins. He says trucking companies compete for jobs primarily on costs and that uncertainty about fuel supply policy could complicate planning efforts.

"Everyone is competing to haul a load from Point A to Point B," Kedzie said. "Labor costs are set. You know what you will pay a driver. You need to nail down what the cost of fuel is. The low bidder would get that load. You better be pretty accurate in predicting what the price of fuel will be."

Paige Anderson, director of government relations at the Association for Convenience and Fuel Retailing, has similar worries.

Her trade group represents more than 154,000 convenience stores across the U.S. that sell 80

percent of the country's motor fuel, she said.

Anderson is concerned that the EPA's proposal treats biodiesel differently than other biofuels.

"We are very concerned with this latest EPA effort to bring that one obligation down so low without looking at the others," Anderson said. "All obligations are intertwined. Either you need to lower all obligations or keep it as is."

Economic and energy experts say they expect the EPA's proposed changes to have little impact on the transportation industry and consumers, mostly because biofuels represent only about 10 percent of total transport fuel in the U.S.

"Even increased mandates of biofuels still represent a very small percentage of the overall transportation fuel market," said Nick Loris, an economist at the Heritage Foundation who focuses on environmental and energy issues. "You won't see a serious economic impact on consumers from reducing biofuel."

Loris, who opposes the Renewable Fuel Standard, said the mandate creates distortions in the marketplace.

"Policies change all the time," Loris said. "In some instances, there will be winners, in others there will be losers. It's OK to discount the certainty for an industry if it's relying on a mandate or subsidies or preferential treatment from the federal government. We have to see whether biofuels can be stable in a market where there is no RFS."

Christopher Knittel, an economics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, also says consumers won't be affected by changes to the biofuel rules.

"We know from basic economics that a stricter RFS puts upward pressure on retail prices, but because it's a small share of total fuel, it never will have a huge impact on what consumers pay,"

Knittel said. "The RFS is a small tax on 10 percent of our fuel spread across the U.S. Even though it is good at giving money to the Midwest, no one feels pain from it on a large scale. I don't think this policy should live or die based on how it impacts retail prices."

Anderson says she is trying to be ready for anything after the public comment period on the EPA's proposed changes ended Oct. 19.

Because of widespread opposition to the plan, the White House recently asked the EPA to halt its changes. And Thursday night, Pruitt ensured Republicans that he would keep the standard intact, although it is too early to say for sure what will happen.

"Uncertainty makes me ask a lot of questions," Anderson said. "Uncertainty means, are we going to be able to get a product we need to blend? Are we going to be able to get product at a competitive price? Is product going to become scarce? Are we going to be raising the cost of blending biofuel? If that's the case, will it raise costs for consumers? Ultimately, that's what uncertainty does."

The Saint Louis American

http://www.stlamerican.com/news/local_news/epa-plans-to-conduct-further-testing-for-radioactive-waste-at/article_db2bb120-b5ce-11e7-9554-679027b824c4.html

EPA Plans To Conduct Further Testing For Radioactive Waste At West Lake Landfill

By Eli Chen, 10/20/17

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to conduct further testing for radioactive contamination at the West Lake Landfill Superfund site in Bridgeton.

Albert Kelly, senior adviser to EPA administrator Scott Pruitt and the head of the agency's Superfund Task Force, made the announcement at a forum late Thursday, where members of the community voiced concerns about the landfill. Kelly said he expects the sampling to occur within the next 90 days in the western part of the site, a portion that agency officials often refer to as "Operating Unit 2."

The announcement came as good news to area residents, who have long worried that that contamination has damaged their health.

EPA officials say they are confident that they know the extent of radioactive waste at the West Lake Landfill. Based on aerial photographs and other data that has tracked the movement of the waste, the EPA had previously stated that it would not conduct more testing. But Kelly said Thursday that the EPA is willing to do so to ensure that it has enough information to allay residents' fears.

"We think it's very doubtful that you're going to find other radioactive places," he said. "But if in fact that will put to rest the concern that people have, then we're going to do that."

People in the community who have complained that the contamination could be connected to local cases of cancer and autoimmune disease have insisted that federal officials perform more tests.

"This is a huge win for the community," said Dawn Chapman, co-founder of the Just Moms STL activist group. "We've only been asking for five years."

She also said that Kelly's visit to Bridgeton made her feel optimistic that federal officials are moving towards a solution for the site. "I think we're closer to a remedy that we've ever been. And there's something about this guy that makes me believe him," Chapman said.

The West Lake Landfill has been on the EPA's National Priorities List since 1990. The World War II-era radioactive waste underneath it sits approximately 600 feet from a smoldering fire under the adjacent Bridgeton Landfill.

"This has been 27 years and how many people have been damaged [by] the inaction in years past?" Kelly said. "We're going to stop that so we don't have another generation of people who

have health issues over this and we're going to do our very, very best to get this as clean as a whistle."

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-caves-on-ethanol-1508703048?mg=prod/accounts-wsj>

Trump Caves On Ethanol

The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board, 10/22/17

The bipartisan pull of corporate welfare—also known as the swamp—is powerful. Last week it swallowed up no less than Donald Trump and his fearless Environmental Protection Agency administrator, Scott Pruitt. They caved under pressure from the ethanol lobby and political extortion from Republican Senators Joni Ernst, Deb Fischer and Chuck Grassley.

Mr. Pruitt announced Thursday that EPA won't reduce its proposed 19.24 billion gallon biofuels quota for 2018, and may even increase it. The EPA will further consider giving biofuels a pass to pollute that no other industry enjoys, via what's known as a Reid Vapor Pressure waiver for high-ethanol blends.

As bad, the EPA announced it will keep intact a compliance credit scheme that benefits global and integrated oil companies and ethanol producers at the expense of smaller independent refiners and manufacturers. "Renewable identification numbers," or RINs, are a credit created each time a gallon of ethanol is mixed with fuel. The EPA requires refiners to use RINs as proof of compliance with biofuel standards, and credits can be bought or sold.

Because only major global refiners have the capabilities to blend their own fuel, most small and midsize merchant refiners have no way of producing RINs in-house. Big Oil, the ethanol lobby and speculators have cornered the market for the credits, and RIN prices are soaring.

In 2012 Philadelphia Energy Solutions paid \$10 million for RINs. This year, it will spend \$300 million, twice the price of payroll. Only crude oil—the refinery's main input—costs more annually. Because of that skyrocketing expense, Moody's has dropped the refinery's credit rating

from a B+ to a CCC- in four years. Mr. Pruitt's announcement means it will get no RIN relief.

These independent refiners provide the sort of blue-collar manufacturing jobs that President Trump promised to protect. Philadelphia Energy Solutions had to lay off 70 workers last year. Ryan O'Callaghan, the president of United Steelworkers Local 10-1, said the EPA announcement makes him fearful for the fate of his 692 members who remain at the refinery. Philadelphia Energy Solutions also uses hundreds of contractors from the building trades unions.

"I voted Donald Trump, I urged my members to vote for Donald Trump, and I urged them to ask their families and friends to vote for Donald Trump," Mr. O'Callaghan said. "As a union president, to support a Republican candidate for president, there was some backlash. And now we're left out in the cold. It's very disappointing. It feels like the government has the chips stacked against us. We're crushed in between Big Oil and Big Ethanol. I thought President Trump would be able to see through that. Hopefully he changes his mind and goes with workers."

The Trump Administration betrayed these manufacturing workers after threats from a handful of Republican Senators who were willing to vote with Democrats to protect ethanol. The federal government has to compel consumers to use biofuels because the product doesn't sell on its own merits. Thirty-three pro-ethanol Senators admitted as much in a letter to the EPA this month.

"The industry is poised for growth, in accordance with the intent of the law, if EPA sends the market signals with increased volumes," this bipartisan group wrote. But any decrease in the mandate would be "disruptive, unprecedented and very troubling."

Mr. Grassley said that if Mr. Pruitt failed to follow these Senatorial directives, he would "hold up EPA nominees. I think there's plenty of senators [who] would do that." Mr. Grassley doesn't sit on the Environment and Public Works Committee, but Senators Ernst and Fischer do.

One of their hostages was Bill Wehrum, the nominee to run the Office of Air and Radiation. That office administers the all-powerful Clean Air Act, so the sudden bout of bipartisanship threatened Mr. Pruitt's broader reform agenda at the EPA.

Mr. Trump rode to office promising to drain the swamp and win negotiations on behalf of the American people. But for all of that reform rhetoric, his EPA is now capitulating to one of Washington's worst examples of welfare for big business. By showing weakness, the Trump Administration invites further special-interest shakedowns.

NBC News

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/mueller-now-investigating-democratic-lobbyist-tony-podesta-n812776>

Mueller Now Investigating Democratic Lobbyist Tony Podesta

By Tom Winter And Julia Ainsley, 10/23/17

WASHINGTON — Tony Podesta and the Podesta Group are now the subjects of a federal investigation being led by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, three sources with knowledge of the matter told NBC News.

The probe of Podesta and his Democratic-leaning lobbying firm grew out of Mueller's inquiry into the finances of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to the sources. As special counsel, Mueller has been tasked with investigating possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia.

Manafort had organized a public relations campaign for a non-profit called the European Centre for a Modern Ukraine (ECMU). Podesta's company was one of many firms that worked on the campaign, which promoted Ukraine's image in the West.

The sources said the investigation into Podesta and his company began as more of a fact-finding mission about the ECMU and Manafort's role in the campaign, but has now morphed into a criminal inquiry into whether the firm violated the Foreign Agents Registration Act, known as FARA.

Under FARA, people who lobby on behalf of foreign governments, leaders or political parties

must file detailed disclosures about their spending and activities with the Justice Department. Willful failure to file the forms is a felony and can result in up to five years in prison, though such prosecutions are rare.

The Podesta Group filed a FARA registration for its work with ECMU only after the payments were reported by the media. Manafort's firm also filed a FARA registration after media reports in June disclosed its work in Ukraine from 2012 through 2014.

The ECMU was reportedly backed by the Party of Regions, the pro-Russian and oligarch-funded Ukrainian political party for which Manafort worked as a consultant, and which paid his firm millions. Viktor Yanukovych of the Party of Regions, a Manafort client, was president of Ukraine during the ECMU campaign, which ran from 2012 to 2014. He fled the country in 2014.

Tony Podesta is the chairman of the Podesta Group and the brother of John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign chairman. John Podesta is not currently affiliated with the Podesta Group and is not part of Mueller's investigation.

In a statement, a spokesman for the Podesta Group said the firm "is cooperating fully with the Special Counsel's office and has taken every possible step to provide documentation that confirms timely compliance. In all of our client engagements, the Podesta Group conducts due diligence and consults with appropriate legal experts to ensure compliance with disclosure regulations at all times — and we did so in this case."

A spokesperson for Mueller's office declined to comment.

In late August, NBC News reported that Special Counsel Mueller's team sent subpoenas to six firms who were involved in public relations lobbying for ECMU.

The subpoenas sought testimony from public relations executives who worked on the campaign organized by Manafort, people directly familiar with the matter told NBC News.

One source with knowledge of the investigation said that federal investigators have now met with several former staffers of the various firms involved in the ECMU campaign.

Mueller's team is closely examining the lobbying campaign, which ran between 2012 and 2014. Six firms participated in the public relations effort that Manafort coordinated, paid for by the Brussels-based ECMU. The stated goal was to build support for Ukraine's entry into the European Union, the same source said.

Related: Mueller Seeks Testimony From PR Firms That Worked With Manafort

Two of the firms, Podesta Group and Mercury LLC, worked in Washington with Manafort partner Rick Gates, according to lobbying disclosure records. Three other firms worked in Europe, the executive said. NBC News could not confirm the identity of those three.

Manafort, whose Alexandria, Virginia, apartment was raided by FBI agents in July, has emerged as a key figure in the Mueller probe. The inquiry into the lobbying campaign appears to be part of a larger investigation into his work for the Party of Regions, his offshore banking transactions, his tax compliance and his real estate dealings, people familiar with the probe have told NBC News.

The Associated Press first revealed the pro-Ukraine lobbying campaign in August 2016, while Manafort was still running the Trump campaign. Manafort left the campaign within days.

The report said the ECMU campaign was designed to sway public opinion and included attempts to solicit favorable press coverage in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/national-democrats-are-jittery-about-va-governors-race/2017/10/22/22bec7ee-b5c9-11e7-a908-a3470754bbb9_story.html?utm_term=.82a0720ffaab

National Democrats Are Jittery About Va. Governor's Race

By David Weigel And Ed O'Keefe, 10/22/17

LAS VEGAS — The Democratic National Committee gathered here over the past week with one worry on every activist's mind: We'd better not lose the Virginia governor's race.

It's a surprising case of the jitters over a place that hasn't elected a Republican to statewide office in eight years — and that voted resoundingly against Donald Trump last year. But nationally, Democrats haven't won a marquee race since losing the presidency. They lag Republicans in fundraising. A loss for Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam against Republican Ed Gillespie on Nov. 7 could stir doubts about message and strategy just as the party is gearing up nationally for next year's all-important midterm elections.

"We're Ground Zero," Susan Swecker, chairwoman of the Democratic Party of Virginia, said inside the Bally's casino here, where party leaders and activists from all 57 states and territories gathered over the past few days. "All eyes are on us. I can understand that, because last year broke my heart."

Less clear is whether the jitters will help — or whether a Northam victory gives Democrats any kind of road map for 2018. Leaders and activists spent a lot of time in Las Vegas talking about Nevada and Virginia, two increasingly urban and diverse states that bucked 2016's Trump wave, as models for what every state party could achieve if they organized and elevated their activist base.

They spent less time talking about Trump's winning message on jobs and fairness, or the states where it was so effective, or how to win in those places with a sales pitch of their own.

"From a branding perspective, we have a huge problem," said Ken Martin, the chairman of Minnesota's Democratic Farmer-Labor Party. "It was the biggest challenge for us in the last year — and our biggest mistake was uniting around 'Stop Trump.'"

Defeat in Virginia could also prompt another brawl between progressive activists and the party's establishment. Northam, backed by most of Virginia's elected Democrats, won his nomination over Sen. Bernie Sanders-backed former congressman Tom Perriello — a race that some activists saw as a replay of the 2016 Democratic presidential primaries.

Northam's defeat would let activists argue that the party that picked Hillary Clinton over Sanders (Vt.), and Tom Perez over Sanders-backed Rep. Keith Ellison (Minn.) for Democratic National Committee chairman in February, had once again bet against progressives and lost. It would set the stage for more infighting in 2018.

Ideology aside, most party leaders seemed bent on avoiding in Virginia the kind of overconfidence they say settled in near the end in 2016, when many Democrats assumed that Clinton would win the presidency.

"That sense of complacency led people to take their foot off the gas," Martin said. "We saw a dip in volunteers in the last few weeks, turnout dropped. That can't ever happen again."

Perez went further, rebuking Democrats who believe Virginia is now solidly, safely, permanently blue after years of population growth in the diverse suburbs of Washington. "I hear 'demographics is destiny' and it's nails on a chalkboard to me," the DNC chairman said at a session here over the weekend. "Demographics is not destiny. Organizing is destiny."

Northam, a former Army doctor and pediatric neurologist, is in a neck-and-neck race with Gillespie, a former lobbyist and GOP strategist. There are a number of reasons to wonder whether Democrats can retain the executive mansion, which Terry McAuliffe now occupies.

Virginia gubernatorial candidate Ed Gillespie is a former chairman of the RNC and a former lobbyist. (Steve Helber/AP)

The DNC began pouring resources into Virginia in July, spending \$1.5 million up front to hire 40 staff members. In addition, national staff members were loaned out to run communications for campaigns down the ballot. The party paid for direct mail to nonwhite voters; DNC Hispanic Media Director Francisco Pelayo and party operative Andrea Peoples were tasked with outreach to Latino and black female voters.

But they're doing it with less money than the Republican National Committee. The DNC raised \$4.4 million in August and spent slightly more money than it took in. As of last month, its debt — \$4.1 million — was almost twice the size of its cash reserves. The RNC, meanwhile, reported \$45.9 million in the bank and no debt. With less fanfare than the DNC, it has spent \$3 million in Virginia, helping fund 80 staff members on the ground for Republican campaigns.

“The RNC never left Virginia and has had field staff on the ground since 2013,” said RNC spokesman Michael Ahrens.

The Northam-Gillespie race has heated up in the last month, as Gillespie, who once urged his party to moderate on immigration, launched half a dozen TV and radio ads warning that Northam would leave Virginia vulnerable to the Central American gang MS-13 by refusing to ban “sanctuary cities” with policies of protecting illegal immigrants and not cooperating with federal authorities to deport them. (Virginia does not have sanctuary cities.)

Democrats have jumped at the chance to link Gillespie with Trump.

“We’ve got an opponent who’s running a Donald Trump-style campaign,” Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) said in a video message to the gathering in Las Vegas.

“We’ve watched a Republican nominee for governor run racially tinged ads that play on our fears,” said former attorney general Eric H. Holder Jr. Former president Barack Obama delivered a similar critique of Gillespie at a Northam rally in Richmond last week.

But the party’s broader strategy for winning in states Trump won has been less of a focus.

Democrats believe Trump would have lost the White House last year had he not stolen the mantle of populism, a traditionally Democratic message. But there was not much soul-searching about messaging among those who convened in Las Vegas. There was no debate about the

“identity politics” that the party’s critics accused them of embracing in 2016, and little discussion of how to communicate differently in the states that supported Trump last year.

Instead, party leaders focused heavily on organizing and engaging the base.

The DNC, for instance, is looking at Virginia and New Jersey, the other state with a governor’s race next month, to test new voter outreach technology. In an interview, DNC Chief Technology Officer Raffi Krikorian said the party had deployed Facebook messenger bots, texts to likely voters, and tactics for encouraging volunteers to turn their own social-media contacts into voters.

“My team’s focus is on how we get tools in the hands of activists and state parties,” Krikorkian said. “We’re seeing if we can leverage friends effectively. Instead of doing canvassing on a geographic basis, what if we start with your circle of friends?”

The year so far has frustrated Democrats trying to turn Trump’s high disapproval ratings, and the burning energy of political activists, into votes. Democrats have over-performed in a series of special legislative races. And the DNC is helping Washington Democrats ahead of a Nov. 7 special election that could flip the state’s Senate from red to blue. But the investments haven’t yet paid off with victories. The DNC spent \$2 million and hired 10 staff members to boost Jon Ossoff’s campaign for a House seat in suburban Atlanta — a historically expensive race that Republicans ended up winning.

In interviews, state party leaders said they have spent the year rebuilding. Jane Kleebe, the chairwoman of Nebraska’s Democrats, assembled a list of the state’s Democratic officeholders because none existed. Stephen Webber, the chairman of Missouri’s Democrats, told a Midwestern caucus meeting that his party had developed a message for rural counties “where we used to win 60 percent of the vote and now barely win 15 percent” — a populist campaign against corporate farming conglomerates.

An additional challenge as 2018 approaches is keeping the battles inside the party at bay.

In Las Vegas, some Democrats remained committed to those battles. For the first two days of a

four-day meeting, much of the news coverage focused on a conflict over the list of the party's at-large membership, which included several lobbyists; at a Friday meeting, the resolutions committee put the party on record against any donations from people who represent corporate interests that the party opposes.

But for most Democrats, the best way to stave off another round of infighting is to win.

Said Holder: "Now is not a time for our party to be beholden to ideological litmus tests. We're held together by common interests."

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-says-no-change-to-401-k-plans-under-forthcoming-tax-proposal-1508761011>

Trump Says 'No Change' To 401(K) Plans Under Forthcoming Tax Proposal

By Richard Rubin and Peter Nicholas, 10/23/17

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump on Monday morning vowed a popular retirement savings program would remain untouched in the forthcoming Republican tax overhaul proposal.

Democratic opponents of the Republican tax plan have said it would favor the wealthiest Americans. In pledging to protect up front tax breaks for the retirement program known as 401(k), Mr. Trump seems intent on rebutting that argument and giving the tax plan a populist hue.

"There will be NO change to your 401(k)," the president wrote on Twitter. "This has always been a great and popular middle class tax break that works, and it stays!"

Congressional Republicans who are crafting a tax overhaul proposal are looking for ways to generate revenue to support broad reductions in individual tax rates.

One idea would limit the amount of pretax money households can sock away for retirement saving. Such a move would likely generate significant political blowback, but it hasn't been explicitly ruled out, stirring worry among industry lobbyists.

Lobbyists and others in the retirement and financial-services industries who have spoken to congressional staff and committee members say lawmakers are looking at proposals that would allow 401(k) participants to contribute significantly less before taxes than what is currently allowed in a traditional tax-deferred 401(k). An often mentioned amount is \$2,400 a year. It isn't clear whether that would apply only to 401(k)s or IRAs, or both.

Currently, employees under age 50 can save up to \$18,000 a year in a 401(k) before taxes, while those 50 or older can set aside up to \$24,000. In an IRA, the annual contribution limits are capped at \$5,500 and \$6,500 for the same age groupings. The 401(k) limits are scheduled to rise to \$18,500 and \$24,500 in 2018.

Members of the House Ways and Means Committee are widely expected to release a version of the tax bill by mid-November.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 1h



I had a very respectful conversation with the widow of Sgt. La David Johnson, and spoke his name from beginning, without hesitation!

💬 21K ↻ 4.7K ❤️ 22K ✉️



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 2h



Two dozen NFL players continue to kneel during the National Anthem, showing total disrespect to our Flag & Country. No leadership in NFL!

💬 17K ↻ 7.9K ❤️ 34K ✉️



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 2h



There will be NO change to your 401(k). This has always been a great and popular middle class tax break that works, and it stays!

💬 5.7K ↻ 7.9K ❤️ 34K ✉️

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 6/27/2017 9:36:12 PM
Subject: RE: Definers

If we could lock in next Thursday morning that would be great. Otherwise this upcoming Friday works (I cant be part of it).

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:57 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

That makes sense. I'm asking Joe to give me a demo. I would do it on Thursday, but I have to take the day off for a family matter. If you would like to be part of the demo, I could find another day. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:55 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

Thanks man! I am out on Friday but the rapid response clips are helpful and the interns doing a great job but we miss stuff late at night.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:53 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

I'm trying to get a time set up with him on Friday. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:52 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Where are we on setting up a call with Joe. I really don't need to do a call, I know the quality of their product. Last night a story about in the NYT and would've been nice to have someone at the helm to send that out as it happened.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 10/4/2017 10:37:50 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Koch Industries: About that NICK AYERS conversation ... -- THE LATEST IN LAS VEGAS: Trump heading to Nevada as police search for motive -- ELIANA JOHNSON on Trump's Iran plan -- OBAMAS dine at Fiola for 25th anniversary

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Koch Industries

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Driving the Day

Good Wednesday morning. WAR BETWEEN THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE HILL ... ANDREW RESTUCCIA and MATT NUSSBAUM's incredible scoop

(<http://politi.co/2g9ovd1>) that VP Mike Pence's chief of staff Nick Ayers called for a "purge" of Republican lawmakers who oppose President Trump, urged donors to withhold cash from Republican lawmakers and openly mused about being in the minority on Capitol Hill has reignited a long-simmering war between the White House and Capitol Hill. The Trump White House and Republicans on the Hill have tried repeatedly to get on the same page. One Ayers quote that's particularly painful for the 292 Republican lawmakers on Capitol Hill is when Pence's top aide seemingly encouraged donors to stop donating to everyone besides the RNC if they didn't get something done before the end of 2017. This is no small thing, according to top Republicans that we spoke to on both sides of the Capitol.

TEXT FROM A TOP REPUBLICAN ABOUT AYERS: "Fair to say both sides of the capitol are perturbed. ... Not because we see an actual threat, but because who the f**k are you?"

-- **WHITE HOUSE INSIDERS TELL US** that Trump's circle was not at all bothered by the Ayers remarks.

-- **ON THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR:** This didn't make it into Andrew and Matt's piece, but Ayers said infrastructure and tax reform might be "a combined effort." We checked in with all of our sources involved in this issue on whether this was true. They all said there was no effort afoot at all to pair the issues.

NBC NEWS SCOOP -- CAROL LEE, KRISTEN WELKER, STEPHANIE RUHLE and

DAFNA LINZER: "Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was on the verge of resigning this past summer amid mounting policy disputes and clashes with the White House, according to multiple senior administration officials who were aware of the situation at the time.

"The tensions came to a head around the time President Donald Trump delivered a politicized speech in late July to the Boy Scouts of America, an organization Tillerson once led, the officials said.

"Just days earlier, Tillerson had openly disparaged the president, referring to him as a 'moron,' after a July 20 meeting at the Pentagon with members of Trump's national security team and Cabinet officials, according to three officials familiar with the incident. While it's unclear if he was aware of the incident, Vice President Mike Pence counseled Tillerson, who is fourth in line to the presidency, on ways to ease tensions with Trump, and other top administration officials urged him to remain in the job at least until the end of the year, officials said." <http://nbcnews.to/2xh2lQu>

GET READY FOR THIS: "More GOP senators willing to tell Trump to take a hike: An increasing number of Republicans have nothing to lose in crossing the president and Mitch McConnell -- a warning sign for tax reform," by Burgess Everett and Seung Min Kim: <http://politi.co/2yH0ZuV>

BIG SCOOP -- ELIANA JOHNSON: "Trump prepares to decertify Iran deal - and then save it": "Donald Trump's national security team has unanimously recommended that he decertify the Iran nuclear deal - but that he stop short of pushing Congress to reimpose sanctions on Tehran that could unravel the agreement. Trump's team plans to work with Congress and European allies to apply new pressure on the Iranian regime, according to a strategy developed in an Iran policy review led by National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster. But the strategy assumes the nuclear deal will remain intact for now.

"The deliberations ahead of an October 15 deadline to certify Iran's compliance with the deal, a centerpiece of President Barack Obama's foreign policy agenda, were described by a half-dozen sources inside and outside the administration who have participated in the internal debate.

"As a candidate, Trump described the agreement as 'catastrophic' and 'the worst deal ever.' But the strategy represents a nuanced approach to one of the most important foreign policy decisions of his early presidency. The goal is to allow the president to demonstrate contempt for the agreement and broadcast a new level of toughness toward the Iranian regime-without triggering the international chaos several of his advisers warn would follow from a total withdrawal from the 2015 deal." <http://politi.co/2xPozsu>

THE LATEST IN LAS VEGAS ...

BREAKING AT 12:32 A.M. -- L.A. TIMES: "Girlfriend of Las Vegas gunman, a 'person of interest' in mass shooting, has landed in Los Angeles," by Joel Rubin and Richard Winton: "Marilou Danley, the girlfriend of the gunman who shot and killed 59 people at a country music concert in Las Vegas, returned Tuesday night to the United States from the Philippines, according to multiple law enforcement sources. Danley was met by federal agents at Los Angeles International Airport, said the officials, who were not authorized to discuss the case publicly. Danley was not placed under arrest and it was not known when, or if, she would agree to be interviewed about Stephen Paddock, who killed himself in the Las Vegas hotel room from which he launched his deadly shooting spree."

-- NYT, A1: "Meticulous Planning by Las Vegas Gunman Before He Opened Fire": "Before he mowed down concertgoers from a perch high in a hotel tower, Stephen C. Paddock created a ring of surveillance around him, with video cameras in his suite and in the hallway, law enforcement officials said on Tuesday. But investigators were still at a loss to offer a motive for the massacre. ... Police officials said that Mr. Paddock, 64, had set up two cameras in the hallway, including one on a service cart, and a third camera over the suite door peephole." <http://nyti.ms/2fPcs7N>

-- LEAKED PHOTOS from inside Paddock's hotel room. <http://dailym.ai/2hM9Gkk>

-- "Frantic switchboard calls, geometry of fire, led police to killer on Mandalay Bay's 32nd floor," by WaPo's Scott Wilson and Lynh Bui: "The journey to the room at the end of the 32nd floor began at the switchboards of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, a tropical fantasy in the Nevada desert. As the noises began, scores of confused guests pressed zero on their room phones almost all at once. The first callers asked about what sounded like a sustained burst of fireworks. Others wondered: Was it something else? The hotel operators realized that for callers on some floors, the popping was louder than for guests phoning in from others." <http://wapo.st/2kmdNVf>

-- "Las Vegas Shooter Stephen Paddock Gambled With at Least \$160K in Recent Weeks," by NBC News' Tom Winter, Pete Williams and Andrew Blankstein: "There were 16 Currency Transaction Reports, or CTRs, filed for Paddock in recent weeks. The Treasury Department and the IRS mandate that casinos file the reports for 'each transaction in currency involving cash-in and cash-out of more than \$10,000 in a gaming day.' ... A source familiar with the investigation told NBC News that Paddock was a frequent player 'with the highest status' at Caesars Entertainment properties in Las Vegas." <http://nbcnews.to/2yH71LL>

-- "Las Vegas Strip shooter prescribed anti-anxiety drug in June," by the Las Vegas Review-Journal's Paul Harasim: "Stephen Paddock, who killed at least 58 people and wounded hundreds more in Las Vegas on Sunday with high-powered rifles, was prescribed an anti-anxiety drug in June that can lead to aggressive behavior, the Las Vegas Review-Journal has learned. ...

"Records from the Nevada Prescription Monitoring Program obtained Tuesday

show Paddock was prescribed 50 10-milligram diazepam tablets by Henderson physician Dr. Steven Winkler on June 21. A woman who answered the phone at Winkler's office would not make him available to answer questions and would neither confirm nor deny that Paddock was ever a patient. Paddock purchased the drug -- its brand name is Valium -- without insurance at a Walgreens store in Reno on the same day it was prescribed. He was supposed to take one pill a day." <http://bit.ly/2wxqE8E>

-- **"As the wounded kept coming, hospitals dealt with injuries rarely seen in the U.S.,"** by WaPo's Tim Craig, Felicia Mello and Lena Sun: "So many patients poured into the city's hospitals that pediatric surgeons were operating on adults and obstetricians were attending to trauma patients. Many of the most critically wounded patients arrived at the 541-bed University Medical Center of Southern Nevada, the state's only Level One trauma center. Over about four hours, it received 104 patients. More than 80 percent were gunshot victims. Douglas R. Fraser, the hospital's chief of trauma surgery, struggled with other doctors there to deal with bullet wounds in torsos and limbs that had shredded human flesh into 'unusual patterns,' caused 'extreme fractures' and bounced through bodies with horrific force." <http://wapo.st/2xRTgL2>

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THE POLITICS OF GUN CONTROL -- "Dems lower their outrage on guns after massacre," by Heather Caygle and Elana Schor: "The last record-setting shooting spree on U.S. soil - at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, last year - prompted Democrats to occupy the House floor for a full day in protest of the GOP's refusal to take up new gun control laws. This time, the minority party is employing tamer tactics, tamping down talks of another sit-in and demanding primarily that Republicans drop a gun silencer bill they've been pushing.

"The difference in approach speaks to the tricky, shifting politics of guns for Democrats. It's easy for them to lambaste Republicans for failing to take action after mass shootings. But elevating the issue heading into a midterm election next year - something Democrats said this week they have no plans to do - could repel the very voters they need to woo to regain control of Congress. Not to mention make their vulnerable red-state Democrats prime for Republican attacks.

"There's also a growing sense of futility in the debate. Gun control was a lost cause even under divided government, let alone when Republicans control both chambers of Congress and the White House." <http://politi.co/2hNc8Hg>

-- **@StevenTDennis:** "Asked about bump stocks, Senator John Kennedy [R-La.] said this: 'I do not think that the United States Congress can legislate away evil.'"

SCOOP -- JOSH DAWSEY and RACHAEL BADE: "Ryan asked White House to reconsider ousting Price": "Speaker Paul Ryan last week urged the White House to reconsider ousting Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, his longtime friend who had come under fire for often using taxpayer-funded private jets for travel, according to two people with knowledge of the call. John Kelly, the White House chief of staff, called the Wisconsin Republican minutes before the departure was announced Friday afternoon. It was a heads-up call ... Ryan urged Kelly to reconsider and touted the Georgia Republican's experience in Congress and work in the administration ... Price has long had the speaker's ear on policy matters and was part of Ryan's old 'Jedi Council,' a group of fiscally conservative rabble-rousers who used to powwow when Republicans were in the minority." <http://politi.co/2ynO4lf>

UP NEXT -- "White House to seek \$29B disaster aid package," by AP's Andy Taylor: "The Trump administration is finalizing a \$29 billion disaster aid package that combines \$16 billion to shore up the government-backed flood insurance program with almost \$13 billion in new relief for hurricane victims. The huge request is expected to be officially sent to Congress on Wednesday, but its outlines were characterized by officials who demanded anonymity because the \$29 billion measure is not yet public.

"The request would address two pressing needs. The first is to pump money into the flood insurance program, which is rapidly running out of cash to pay an influx of claims from victims of hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. At the same time, the Federal Emergency Management Agency continues to spend money for disaster relief operations at a high rate and requires more money." <http://bit.ly/2xg1fjr>

-- TRUMP: FORGIVE PUERTO RICO'S DEBT: "In an interview with Fox News, Mr. Trump said his administration would help Puerto Rico 'wipe out' the debt to help it recover from the extensive damage left by Hurricane Maria two weeks ago. He did not offer specifics. 'We're going to do something. We're going to get it back on its feet,' the president said. 'We have to look at their whole debt structure,' he told Geraldo Rivera, a Fox News correspondent, on 'Hannity.' 'You know, they owe a lot of money to your friends on Wall Street, and we're going to have to wipe that out. You can say goodbye to that. I don't know if it's Goldman Sachs, but whoever it is, you can wave goodbye to that.' ...

"Reached late on Tuesday, investors who hold Puerto Rico's debt and their advisers said they were taken aback and unwilling to comment. One said it was not clear how seriously they should take the remarks, citing promises like Mr. Trump's so-far-unsuccessful pledge to end the Affordable Care Act, the health care plan passed under President Barack Obama." <http://nyti.ms/2xTE9AS>

GOOD NEWS FOR TRUMP: NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- "Poll: 48 percent approve of Trump's tax proposal," by Steven Shepard: "Voters are receptive to President Donald Trump's proposed tax overhaul, with nearly half of those who have heard about the plan supporting it, according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll. But as Congress begins to draft tax legislation, the poll also shows that some elements

of the outline released by the Trump administration last week are more popular than others. And voters are skeptical they will benefit from any changes to the tax code. ...

"The most popular elements of the initial proposal are doubling the standing deduction from \$12,000 to \$24,000 (62 percent of voters say that should be in the eventual tax bill), reducing the maximum small-business tax rate from 39.6 percent to 25 percent (61 percent), creating a \$500 tax credit for all dependents (61 percent) and increasing the child tax credit (60 percent).

"Among the least popular elements of the proposal: reducing the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 20 percent (39 percent of voters say that should be in the bill) and no longer taxing overseas profits of U.S. companies." <http://politi.co/2fJ6xNK>

SOAK THE RICH ... -- "Conservatives defy GOP orthodoxy on cutting top tax rate," by Rachael Bade and Aaron Lorenzo: "House conservatives -- desperate for a win on tax reform -- are open to nixing some newly proposed tax cuts on the wealthy, challenging the GOP's tax-cuts-for-all orthodoxy. Multiple House Freedom Caucus members said they'd support maintaining the 39.6 percent tax rate on upper-income earners instead of reducing it to 35 percent under the current GOP plan. President Donald Trump, concerned about Democratic accusations that his tax proposal would be seen as a boon to the wealthy, urged Hill Republicans to consider keeping the current top rate as is to preempt those attacks.

"The Freedom Caucus is typically the first to cry foul on any legislation they deem too accommodating to Democrats. And maintaining the top rate runs counter to Republicans' long-held desires to lower rates on all Americans, no matter their wealth. Conservatives don't seem to mind, however -- so long as it ensures passage of the party's main legislative priority." <http://politi.co/2kivhl8>

-- WSJ'S RICH RUBIN in a video with a straw hat on, standing next to cows: **"Talking Taxes: The Sacred Cows of the Tax Code:** GOP plan aims to eliminate some major breaks, but that could prove difficult": "The dilemma -- which Republicans are colliding with right now -- is that many of the biggest tax breaks, especially for individuals, are popular and hard to dislodge. Among the most entrenched are the benefits for employer-sponsored health insurance, state and local taxes, home mortgage interest and charitable donations.

"Those big tax breaks are where the money is. In 2018, households will save about \$110 billion by deducting state and local tax payments and about \$59 billion by deducting charitable donations, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation. The GOP would need to curtail breaks like those to get rates down as far as they want. Employer-sponsored health insurance, likely to be left alone, will lower federal revenue by about \$236 billion in 2018, according to the Tax Policy Center." ***With video***
<http://on.wsj.com/2fPAP5a>

TRUMP'S WEDNESDAY -- Trump and the First Lady will leave this morning for Las

Vegas. The two will visit patients, doctors and "civilian heroes and first responders." They will then return to Washington.

THE JUICE ...

-- **SPOTTED: FORMER PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA** and **MICHELLE OBAMA** celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary last night on Fiola's rooftop at 601 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W. *Instapic by Fiola executive chef Ed Scarpone*
<http://bit.ly/2xg7Kr5> ... **2-min. Facebook video of President Obama's anniversary message** <http://bit.ly/2xPS5hF>

-- **FORMER SPEAKER JOHN BOEHNER** was spotted heading into Russell Tuesday afternoon by himself, in a blazer and slacks sans tie, walking past security. The surprised Capitol Police greeted him as Mr. Speaker, to which he responded, "Just coming in for a haircut. Nothing more."

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump tosses paper towels into a crowd as he hands out supplies at Calvary Chapel on Oct. 3 in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. | Evan Vucci/AP Photo

NOT THE ONION - "IRS awards multimillion-dollar fraud-prevention contract to Equifax," by Steven Overly and Nancy Scola: "The IRS will pay Equifax \$7.25 million to verify taxpayer identities and help prevent fraud under a no-bid contract issued last week, even as lawmakers lash the embattled company about a massive security breach that exposed personal information of as many as 145.5 million Americans. A contract award for Equifax's data services was posted to the Federal Business Opportunities database Sept. 30 - the final day of the fiscal year. The credit agency will 'verify taxpayer identity' and 'assist in ongoing identity verification and validations' at the IRS, according to the award." <http://politi.co/2yn6F0O>

DRIP DRIP -- "Russian-linked Facebook ads targeted Michigan and Wisconsin," by CNN's Manu Raju, Dylan Byers and Dana Bash: "A number of Russian-linked Facebook ads specifically targeted Michigan and Wisconsin, two states crucial to Donald Trump's victory last November, according to four sources with direct knowledge of the situation. Some of the Russian ads appeared highly sophisticated in their targeting of key demographic groups in areas of the states that turned out to be pivotal ... The ads employed a series of divisive messages aimed at breaking through the clutter of campaign ads online, including promoting anti-Muslim messages ... [A] large number of ads appeared in areas of the country that were not heavily contested in the elections, [but] some clearly were geared at swaying public opinion in the most heavily contested battlegrounds." <http://cnn.it/2yHaB8J>

-- **"Rep. Tim Murphy, popular with pro-life movement, urged abortion in affair, texts suggest,"** by Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's Paula Reed Wards: "A text message sent in January to U.S. Rep. Tim Murphy by a woman with whom he had an extra-marital relationship took him to task for an anti-abortion statement posted on Facebook from his office's public account. 'And you have zero issue posting your pro-life stance all over the place when you had no issue asking me to abort our unborn child just last week when we thought that was one of the options,' Shannon Edwards, a forensic psychologist in Pittsburgh with whom the congressman admitted last month to having a relationship, wrote to Mr. Murphy on Jan. 25, in the midst of an unfounded pregnancy scare. A text from Mr. Murphy's cell phone number that same day in response says, 'I get what you say about my March for life messages. I've never written them. Staff does them. I read them and winced. I told staff don't write any more. I will.'" <http://bit.ly/2xf6p3S>

LEGAL, BUT STRANGE -- "Steve King employs family as year-round campaign staff, an unusual approach in Congress," by Des Moines Register's Jason Noble: "U.S. Rep. Steve King employs his son and daughter-in-law as full-time campaign staffers, and has paid them more than \$805,000 since 2004, records show. Although typically legal, an arrangement paying close family members year-round for congressional campaign work for more than a decade is unusual in several respects, experts said. While holding various campaign manager and chairman titles, King's son, Jeff King, has received a steady paycheck dating to at least 2004, the earliest year for which electronic records are available from the Federal Election Commission." <http://dmreg.co/2xfvLys>

LATEST IN THE AARON SCHOCK CASE -- "Judge complains prosecution 'misled' him in Aaron Schock case," by Josh Gerstein: "The federal judge overseeing the criminal case against former Rep. Aaron Schock leveled an unusual public complaint Tuesday that he was misled by a prosecutor on the case. Judge Colin Bruce, of the U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois, also ordered the prosecution to conduct a review of all its court filings in the matter for potential inaccuracies." <http://politi.co/2hLpNyE>

***** **A message from Koch Industries:** According to the World Health Organization, 633 million people lack access to safe water worldwide. At Koch, we are addressing this global crisis with innovative membrane filtration technologies to help turn surface and wastewater back into clean drinking water. It's already making a difference in places such as São Paulo, Brazil, one of the world's largest cities. This is one of the many challenges that our more than 70,000 employees across America are working on each day. From water and agriculture, to renewable fuels, energy efficiency and other advancements that help people improve their lives, our team members are encouraged to think like entrepreneurs and challenge the status quo. Here, everyone is encouraged to speak up with ideas to create greater long-term value for society, our customers and businesses, while also reducing waste so more natural resources are available to meet future needs. Go behind the scenes at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

HMM -- "One Of Trump's Judicial Picks Received A Rare 'Not Qualified' Rating From Top Legal Group," by BuzzFeed's Zoe Tillman: "Charles Goodwin, who serves as a federal magistrate judge in Oklahoma City, is the first of Trump's judicial nominees to receive a 'not qualified' rating from the ABA's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary, which vets all federal court nominees. It's also the first time that a lower court nominee has received that rating since 2006. The ABA committee evaluates judicial nominees on their integrity, professional competence, and judicial temperament."
<http://bzfd.it/2yVL4K5>

-- "Sebelius believed Menendez wanted her to 'take some action,'" by Matt Friedman in Newark: "Former Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius testified Tuesday that two things stuck out to her about an August 2012 meeting she had with U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez and then-Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. One was that she couldn't recall Reid ever arranging a meeting with her and a member of Congress. The other was that she had never been called on to discuss an issue she said lower ranking staff members would normally handle.

"I think it's the only time I was asked to discuss a practice involving a billing issue before [the Centers for] Medicare and Medicaid Services. That is not something I was personally involved in on a basis like this," Sebelius said under questioning at Menendez's federal corruption trial. The issue, as Sebelius understood it via briefings from her own staff, was Florida eye doctor Salomon Melgen's overbilling of Medicare by nearly \$9 million -- money Melgen, now Menendez's co-defendant, was fighting to not have to pay back." <http://politi.co/2wwtEBX>

BREAKING ... BLOOMBERG: "Amazon Faces ???250 Million Bill for Unpaid Taxes, EU Says": "The EU ordered Amazon to pay ???250 million in back taxes to Luxembourg, saying the company had received illegal state aid."
<https://bloom.bg/2hM4BZe>

OY - "Yahoo Triples Estimate of Breached Accounts to 3 Billion," by WSJ's Robert McMillan and Ryan Knutson: "A massive data breach at Yahoo AABA 1.95% in 2013 was far more extensive than previously disclosed, affecting all of its 3 billion user accounts, new parent company Verizon Communications Inc. said on Tuesday. The figure ... is three times the 1 billion accounts Yahoo said were affected when it first disclosed the breach in December 2016. The new disclosure, four months after Verizon completed its acquisition of Yahoo, shows that executives are still coming to grips with the extent of the security problem in what was already the largest hacking incident in history by number of user accounts." <http://on.wsj.com/2xT7NGg>

ON TO MOSCOW -- "New Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman Cuts Price on McLean Mansion," by Realtor.com's Lisa Gordon: "The red brick estate, which came on the market last year at \$4.2 million, recently had its price reduced to \$3.6 million ... The seven-bedroom, five-bath home sits on a half-acre lot down the street from the CIA headquarters, the biggest tourist attraction in McLean. Built in 1985, the 8,852-square-foot home features a mahogany-paneled library, huge master suite, backyard pool, and

outdoor kitchen. Huntsman, a former Utah governor and a 2012 Republican presidential hopeful, bought the property for \$3.1 million in 2014 from U.S. Sen Fred Thompson, who was a GOP presidential contender in 2008." ***With 3 pix of the house***
<http://bit.ly/2yH5SEe>

MEDIAWATCH -- "The press, branded the 'enemy' by Trump, increasingly trusted by the public: Reuters/lpsos poll," by Reuters' Chris Kahn: "The poll of more than 14,300 people found that the percentage of adults who said they had a 'great deal' or 'some' confidence in the press rose to 48 percent in September from 39 percent last November. Earlier this year, Trump branded the entire industry as the 'enemy of the American people.' The percentage of those who said they had 'hardly any' confidence in the press dropped to 45 percent from 51 percent over the same period. Confidence in Trump's administration moved in the opposite direction." <http://reut.rs/2xXf2i7>

-- "'Megyn Kelly Today' Ratings Not All Sunshine for NBC's New Morning Host," by NYT's John Koblin: "Megyn Kelly, the new host of the 9 a.m. hour of NBC's 'Today' show, is off to a soft start in the ratings. In her first week as a cheerful morning personality, Ms. Kelly, a former Fox News anchor, drew an average of 2.5 million viewers, according to Nielsen, with 765,000 of them in the 25-to-54-year-old demographic prized by advertisers and network executives.

"The total audience for 'Megyn Kelly Today,' Ms. Kelly's portion of the show, was roughly in line with what 'Today' was reaching in the same hour before making the change, when it was hosted by Al Roker, Dylan Dreyer and Sheinelle Jones. In the coveted age bracket, the show's audience for Ms. Kelly was 5 percent smaller than it was the previous week." <http://nyti.ms/2xgmpxw>

--Per Michael Calderone's Morning Media: KELSEY SNELL, most recently with The Washington Post, is returning to NPR as a Congressional reporter. She once worked as an intern and production assistant on the weekend edition of "All Things Considered."

LIST DU JOUR -- "Variety's New Power of New York List 2017" -- BEN SMITH on MAGGIE HABERMAN <http://bit.ly/2xZUZAm>

Playbookers

SPOTTED last night at the 2017 German Unity Day celebration at the residence of the German Ambassador -- ***pic*** <http://bit.ly/2xTfPix> : German Ambassador Peter Wittig and Huberta von Voss-Wittig, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Hilary Geary, Associate Justice Samuel Alito, Siemens CEO Joe Kaeser, Belgian Ambassador Dirk Wouters, Nancy Brinker, Michelle Jaconi, Mary Beth Albright, Conrad and Ludmila Cafritz, Ray and Shaista Mahmood, Omar Oweiss, Michael Falcone, John McCarthy.

OBAMA ALUMNI - MIKE FROMAN, the U.S. trade representative in the Obama

administration, has joined the Miller Center at the University of Virginia as Schlesinger Chair.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Mariam Ehrari, formerly of the Clinton campaign and now the interim executive director of the Women's March (hat tip: Lisa Vedernikova)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Norm Pearlstine, retired vice chairman and chief content officer at Time Inc., is 75. **What he's up to these days:** "A bit of writing for Edward Felsenthal at TIME; consulting for several start-ups and young companies, including one run by a Toronto inventor, Steve Mann, best known for his work on wearable computing; serving on the board of InsideClimate News (a not-for-profit); and working as chief information architect at Money.Net, a small company using machine learning to provide data and news to financial professionals." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2xRmcVS>

BIRTHDAYS: Brynne Craig ... Steve Capus, CBS News exec. editor and Evening News EP and an NBC News alum, is 54 ... CBS News alum Sonya McNair ... Todd Malan of Rio Tinto ... AP's Holly Ramer ... Ret. Adm. Mike Mullen is 71 ... Annie Osborne ... ABC News' Santina Leuci ... Dana Mayber ... former SecDef Chuck Hagel is 71 ... Bill Gray of Issue One and FloorCharts fame (h/t Jenn Sherman) ... Rob Shapiro, co-founder and chairman of Sonecon and a Bill Clinton alum ... Elizabeth Bonner, associate at Glover Park Group ... Sean Hackbarth, senior editor at the U.S. Chamber ... Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.) is 37 ... Wes McClelland ... Scott J. Frein, SVP of McGuireWoods Consulting ... BBC's Kasia Madera ... Miles Halpine ... Steve Picheny ... Tim Sparapani ...

... **Katie Waldman** ... Pervaiz Shallwani ... Pete Davis ... Eliza Adelson ... WaPo's Bridget Reed Morawski ... Rachel Berman ... Nick Binzoni ... Liz Wolgemuth, senior comms adviser and speechwriter at Senate HELP ... Chris Morris ... John Scott ... photographer Yan Bighetti de Flogny ... Ronald Tschetter ... Will von Meister ... Matt Roberts ... Margaret Hillmann ... Dane Waters ... Douglas McCain ... Ryan Donmoyer of Ernst & Young ... Maria Carrillo ... Paul Seymour ... Ted Miller ... Patrick Wilson ... Drew Willison, partner at Oldaker & Willison LLP and a Harry Reid alum Mirian Saez ... Phyllis Graham ... Rosemary Shore (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Koch Industries:** The Global Harvest Initiative estimates that the world's population will grow to 9 billion by the year 2050. Until then, the challenge is to find better ways to grow twice as much food on roughly the same amount of land that is used for farming today. At Koch, our scientists explore new natural ways to boost crop performance by harnessing tiny soil microbes that stimulate plant improvements and yield. This is one of the many challenges that our more than 70,000 employees across America work on each day. From agriculture and renewable fuels to energy efficiency and other advancements that help people improve their lives, our team members are encouraged to think like entrepreneurs and challenge the status quo. Here, everyone is encouraged to speak up with ideas to improve efficiency, reduce waste, and create greater long-term value for society, our customers and businesses. Go behind the scenes at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Energy
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 3:08:15 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Energy, presented by the Renewable Fuels Association: With tax vote looming little surety on government funding battle — Pruitt had his office swept for bugs — Reaction to EPA's push to replace Clean Power Plan

By Anthony Adragna | 12/19/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff and Emily Holden

DEJA VU ALL OVER AGAIN: Even as Congress prepares to green-light its massive tax package as soon as today, there's little clarity from senior leaders about how to pass a separate bill before Friday keeping the government open and even less about what's going to be inside it. There's a push to stick disaster aid in the package - Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) backed that Monday - as well an effort to extend a lifeline to clean energy "orphan" tax credits.

House lawmakers rolled out a \$81 billion disaster relief package to help states and territories still recovering from hurricanes, wildfires and other natural disasters. It includes \$12.1 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers for immediate repairs after these storms, as well as provisions to expedite projects meant to mitigate the impacts of future ones. For those playing along at home, that means Congress would have spent more than \$130 billion on severe weather this year, outpacing the total amount of aid after both Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, and the request would be nearly double the \$44 billion ask from the White House this go round. "We have a commitment to our fellow citizens that are in the midst of major rebuilding efforts in all areas, including Texas, Florida, California, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands," Appropriations Chairman [Rodney Frelinghuysen](#) said in a statement.

What other appropriators are reading: Forty Senate Democratic caucus members, led by [Ben Cardin](#), sent a letter to senior chamber leaders urging them to keep end-of-the-year spending legislation free of any environmental riders. If the group holds together, that's enough to uphold a filibuster on the underlying package. Read it [here](#).

Senate Democratic leader [Chuck Schumer](#) didn't sound optimistic Monday on the floor, noting unresolved issues include addressing mine workers pension funding and "adequate" disaster relief. And he slammed Texas Gov. Greg Abbott for requesting immediate federal aid while refusing to tap into the Lone Star state's rainy day fund in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey: "On its face, it's an absurd position for a routine critic of the federal government to take," Schumer said. "I for one don't want to vote a nickel for Texas unless they tap that rainy day fund."

More than 50 groups are out with [a letter](#) this morning urging Congress to tackle tax extenders before skipping town this year. That comes as more than 20 groups, including Alliance to Save Energy and National Association of State Energy Officials, asked senior lawmakers in [a letter](#) to extend several energy efficiency incentives that lapsed at the end of 2016. And six groups made [a similar pitch](#) for a retroactive, multi-year extension of the biodiesel tax incentive.

Most likely outcome? Via Budget & Appropriations Brief: 1. The House passes its partisan "defense-only" spending bill, with mostly Republicans. That bill is H.J. Res. 124 (115), but it is expected that today, its language will be attached by the Rules Committee to H.R. 1370 (115), which would then become the vehicle for the third continuing resolution. 2. The Senate strips out the extra Pentagon funding and adds a handful of riders. (Think "PAYGO" waiver, Alexander-Murray, FISA and maybe hurricane funding.) 3. The House eventually agrees to that bill, but on the backs of Democrats.

Speaking of that tax bill, the League of Conservation Voters sent a last-ditch letter urging members to oppose the conference report, H.R. 1 (115), raising particular alarm over language that would open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling. "This provision is being included in an attempt to generate \$1 billion in government revenue to somehow justify the \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthy, but multiple analyses show that it is unlikely to raise anywhere close to even that miniscule amount," the letter states. Reminder of the energy-related provisions in the package here.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and NRDC's Ed Chen was first to guess there are eight senators older than 80. For today: Same question, different chamber. How many House lawmakers are over 80? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

SOMEBODY'S WATCHING ME? EPA paid \$3,000 in March to have Administrator Scott Pruitt's office checked for surveillance bugs, according to an unnamed EPA source sharing documents with The Hill. The sweep, by New Jersey-based Edwin Steinmetz Associates, did not uncover any bugs. Shortly after that, EPA spent \$25,000 on a private phone booth for Pruitt's office late this summer.

PROBE SOUGHT IN EPA'S 'MEDIA MONITORING' CONTRACT: American Oversight and the Environmental Working Group have asked EPA's inspector general to investigate the agency's \$120,000 no-bid contract with a firm tied to Pruitt to track news coverage of its activities. "The EPA's decision to award a no-bid contract to a highly political organization with close ties to the current EPA Administrator, particularly combined with the fact that a related organization has been using the Freedom of Information Act to investigate the agency's employees, raises numerous questions about how the EPA is allocating its funds and whether it is complying with all government contracting, legal, and ethical requirement," they wrote. An employee of the group, Definers Public Affairs, has also filed dozens of public records requests for information on employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.

Meanwhile, Public Citizen asked GAO to find the contract was awarded improperly and recommend it be rescinded.

Won't back down: One of EPA's top unions, the American Federation of Government Employees Local 704, vowed not to be scared off by the tactics in a statement. "None of us got into this work to be voices of dissent," Nicole Cantello, an official with the union, said. "But in the face of grave injustice and the dangerous actions of the Trump administration, we have a

moral obligation to speak out and do everything within the bounds of the law that we can to fight back."

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** This week marks the tenth anniversary of the Renewable Fuel Standard, helping to provide consumer choice at the pump. The RFS has been an unmitigated success, helping to clean the air, lower gasoline prices, provide greater energy security and boost local economies. Learn more at www.ethanolrfa.org. **

ON AN EMISSION: EPA will take comments on options for a proposal to replace to the Clean Power Plan, rather than openly questioning its authority on greenhouse gas emissions, Pro's Emily Holden reports. But any new rule is unlikely to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. EPA is seeking feedback on ways for coal plants to run more efficiently, which could potentially raise some emissions if plants run more as result. A replacement could also take years to materialize.

Reactions abound: The Clean Air Task Force notes that the George W. Bush administration issued a similar advance notice of proposed rulemaking on the same question and never followed up. (See POLITICO's U.S. climate change timeline.) "The Obama EPA has already engaged in this exercise, beginning nearly seven years ago with listening sessions and a full rulemaking effort with a robust and voluminous supporting record," CATF said in an emailed statement, adding that the Trump administration's own analysis found the rule would have prevented as many as 4,500 premature deaths each year by 2030. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, which represents many coal-reliant co-ops, praised EPA's move.

CONFIRMATION WATCH: The Senate Banking Committee convenes at 10 a.m. today to vote on a host of nominations. But all eyes will be on the fate of former Rep. Scott Garrett's selection to run the Export-Import Bank. Remember Sen. Mike Rounds came out against his nomination last week, which could sink Garrett in the closely divided committee. South Carolina Republican Sen. Tim Scott is also likely a "no" on the nomination, McClatchy DC reports.

Boring but important: The Senate Rules Committee gathers today at 2:30 p.m. to hear testimony on a resolution, S. Res. 355 (115), from Sen. James Lankford. Among other things, the bill would lower the amount of procedural time that could be burned on most lower-level nominees from 30 to eight hours. The time for considering Supreme Court, circuit court and Cabinet-level nominees would remain unchanged. It would also lower the initial procedural requirement for beginning debate on legislation from 60 to 51 votes, while keeping in place the 60 vote threshold for final passage.

CHALLENGED: The New York Times sued the Interior Department on Monday for communications with Secretary Ryan Zinke concerning Bears Ears National Monument. Read it here.

MAIL CALL! MAJOR WORK NEEDED ON REUSE PROGRAM: More than a dozen public health and environmental groups sent a letter to Pruitt urging him not to revive a coal ash reuse promotional program "unless and until significant changes are made to the program." They

further ask the agency to evaluate existing "structural fill and beneficial reuse sites" to assess their impacts on human health and the environment. "EPA, or any other federal agency, must not promote coal ash reuse unless the safety of those practices has been fully evaluated and EPA has published peer-reviewed findings concluding that the specific reuses are safe for human health and the environment," the letter says.

TOSSING OUT SOME TWEAKS: The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners sent a [letter](#) outlining a series of suggestions for revamping the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act. "FERC already has the statutory authority to enact comprehensive reforms of PURPA's implementing regulations, and it would be an enormous missed opportunity if FERC enacted only small changes to them," Travis Kavulla, past president of NARUC, said in a statement.

FAA TO DRONES: BUZZ OFF OUR NUCLEAR SITES: Drones must stay at least 400 feet from seven key DOE facilities, the FAA said Monday. The move marks the first time the FAA has restricted DOE sites from drones. ME knows there will be more than a few folks receiving nicely gift-wrapped drones soon, so here's the [map](#) of where not to go. Mostly you would do well to stay away from national labs and nuclear waste sites.

'UNACCEPTABLE' CLIMATE REMOVAL: GOP Rep. [Carlos Curbelo](#) slammed Trump's decision Monday to remove climate change as a national security risk from his strategy document and urged Congress to step up instead. "Congress needs to take action to ensure our military installations around the world are adapting and mitigating when it comes to climate change, and I challenge the Members of the Climate Solutions Caucus to step up to help lead that effort," the Florida Republican said. Curbelo didn't offer any specific policy ideas for doing so.

STAFFING UP: Tesla has added Holland & Knight to its roster of Washington lobbyists. Former Rep. Tom Reynolds (R-N.Y.) and three of his colleagues have been lobbying for Tesla on the GOP tax bill, [H.R. 1 \(115\)](#), and "solar tariffs" since Nov. 1, according to a disclosure (h/t POLITICO Influence).

CHEEKY: The Sierra Club is sending a Christmas card to 17,000 families in Oklahoma highlighting what they say are Pruitt's actions to weaken environmental protections. Check it out [here](#).

MOVER, SHAKER: Bud Albright, a longtime energy sector veteran, is launching his own firm, Albright Strategies, in January. "I plan to focus on my strengths in matters before the Energy and Commerce Committee, issues of oversight and crisis management, and all matters energy, telecom, health care, and environment related," he emails. Albright's previously been an undersecretary at DOE and former staff director of E&C, among many other stops.

QUICK HITS

- US shale oil drillers set to kick off the new year with big production gains. [CNBC](#).
- Climate change hits Winter Olympic preparation. [Salt Lake Tribune](#).

- Canada oil producers exhaust options as pipelines, railroads fill. [Reuters](#).
- The coastal mortgage time bomb. [Inman](#).
- Public hearing Tuesday on natural gas pipeline that would cross the Potomac. [Washington Post](#).
- Lin-Manuel Miranda petition urges government to aid Puerto Rico. [The Hill](#).

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** The Renewable Fuel Standard, **helping to save consumers money at the pump**, was signed into law ten years ago this week. The RFS saved consumers \$17.8 billion in gasoline expenses in 2015, the equivalent to \$142 per American household, according to a recent analysis in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. Gasoline prices were 18 cents per gallon, or 9.5% lower, because of the RFS. In addition, the RFS has been responsible for increased federal tax revenues. Learn more at www.ethanolrfa.org. #thankyouRFS **

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<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2017/12/19/with-tax-vote-looming-little-surety-on-government-funding-battle-056676>

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
Cc: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Mon 11/13/2017 4:26:11 PM
Subject: RE: Interview

I think their other staff has been, but I think including Joe at one of our pen and pads could be a positive.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 11:26 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Cc: Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Interview

I would say no to Business Insider. They have been incredibly critical.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 13, 2017, at 8:17 AM, Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov> wrote:

We also need to bring in the WaPo people sometime before the end of the year.

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 10:09 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Cc: Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Interview

Joe Perticone of Business Insider reached out and wants to interview the Administrator. He covers Congress more generally.

He's a fair reporter and I worked with him a lot when I was at the RNC and he was at IJ Review. BI has a large readership.

From: Joe Perticone [<mailto:jperticone@businessinsider.com>]
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 10:03 AM
To: Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Cc: Pamela Engel <pengel@businessinsider.com>; Brett LoGiurato
<blogiurato@businessinsider.com>
Subject: Interview

Hey James,

Would love to interview Administrator Pruitt about how the EPA is working now that it's a year into the Trump administration, talking policy specifics and all. I've cc'ed to this email my editors, Brett LoGiurato and Pam Engel too. I hope we can work something out.

Best,

Joe

--

Joe Perticone

Politics Reporter | Business Insider

150 5th Ave, 8th Floor, New York, NY

Mobile: 415.233.2115

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]
Cc: Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 5:17:52 PM
Subject: APPROVAL: Bug sweeping, biometric locks

From: Biesecker, Michael [mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 11:47 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Bug sweeping, biometric locks

Liz, Jahan,

AP will be publishing a story about \$3,000 in taxpayer funds expended in April for a contractor to sweep Administrator Pruitt's office for electronic listening devices. We will also be reporting on spending to install biometric locks in his suite.

When coupled with the previously reported purchase of the privacy booth, it raises questions about why Pruitt feels the need to invest in courier-surveillance measures that none of his predecessors felt were necessary. EPA headquarters is a secure building with armed security and metal detectors at the entrances. Pruitt also has his personal security detail. Is the administrator concerned about the potential for electronic spying against him by the agency's own employees?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA's Protective Service Detail.”

As part of the same story, we will also be mentioning the \$120,000 Definers contract and the FOIAs filed by America Rising targeted at EPA employees viewed as potentially disloyal to the Trump administration. Please provide any comment you have on those issues.

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper

than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”

Thanks,

Michael

AP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 4/16/2018 5:08:54 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by BP: Trump watched 'bits and pieces' of Comey's ABC interview

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by BP

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)) and ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

BREAKING AT THE BOSTON MARATHON -- "Desiree Linden, Yuki Kawauchi capture Boston Marathon victories," by The Boston Globe's Matt Pepin and Rachel Bowers: "For the first time in 33 years, an American woman has claimed victory at the Boston Marathon. Desiree Linden took the lead around the 35-kilometer mark and did not look back, capturing her first major marathon win by a wide margin as she crossed the finish line in 2 hours, 39 minutes, 54 seconds. ...

"Meanwhile, Yuki Kawauchi of Japan completed a wild come-from-behind win, overtaking defending champion Geoffrey Kirui and his 1-minute-31-second lead at the 25.2-mile mark. Kawauchi's unofficial time is 2:15:54." <http://bit.ly/2HFIgFO>

Good Monday afternoon. BREAKING IN NEW YORK: "Cohen Names Trump and GOP Donor as Clients Ahead of Hearing," by Bloomberg's Bob Van Voris and David Voreacos: "Donald Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, says he gave legal advice to three clients in the past year, including the president and Elliott Broidy, former deputy finance chairman of the Republican National Committee.

"Cohen declined to identify the third client in a filing in Manhattan federal court, where he will appear Monday at a hearing to determine whether federal prosecutors can review materials seized in an FBI raid on his office, home and hotel room last week.

"U.S. District Judge Kimba Wood on Monday will consider Trump's extraordinary request that she block his own Justice Department from viewing evidence seized by the FBI. <https://bloom.bg/2HqnWdQ>

-- **@mkraju:** "Despite mounting legal troubles, Michael Cohen is still a part of the RNC finance committee, RNC chairwoman Ronna McDaniel says on @NewDay."

A HEADLINE BEN RAY LUJAN WON'T LIKE ... "Poll: Democrats' advantage in midterm election support is shrinking," by WaPo's Dan Balz and Scott Clement: "Democrats hold an advantage ahead of the midterm elections, but a Washington Post-ABC News poll shows that edge has narrowed since January, a signal to party leaders

and strategists that they could be premature in anticipating a huge wave of victories in November.

"The poll finds that the gap between support for Democratic vs. Republican House candidates dropped by more than half since the beginning of the year. At the same time, there has been a slight increase in President Trump's approval rating, although it remains low. Measures of partisan enthusiasm paint a more mixed picture of the electorate in comparison to signs of Democratic intensity displayed in many recent special elections." <https://wapo.st/2J0ifQR>

... AND A HEADLINE KEVIN MCCARTHY WON'T LIKE ... WSJ: "Some Republicans See House Speaker Race as an Open Field: Leader Kevin McCarthy and Whip Steve Scalise lead a shadow contest to succeed Paul Ryan" <https://on.wsj.com/2H2z7Kb>

***** **A message from BP: As the world grows and demands more energy, it also demands fewer emissions. At BP, we're tackling this dual challenge head on.** Later today, we'll release our first-ever *Advancing the Energy Transition* report telling you just how we're doing it. Stay tuned! *****

THINK HE WATCHED LAST NIGHT? -- @realDonaldTrump at 8:25 a.m.: "Comey drafted the Crooked Hillary exoneration long before he talked to her (lied in Congress to Senator G), then based his decisions on her poll numbers. Disgruntled, he, McCabe, and the others, committed many crimes!"

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS on AF1, via Gabby Morrongiello of the Washington Examiner: "He saw bits and pieces ... didn't watch the whole thing. I think it's pretty similar -- we didn't learn anything new. Comey is a self-admitted leaker. He's been proven to be dishonest and I think his credibility is really at hand and it's quite interesting that he would question someone else's when he has such a lack of credibility himself."

-- **GARRETT GRAFF's** Comey book review in Rolling Stone, **"James Comey's 'A Higher Loyalty' Is a Study in Contradictions, Inside and Out"**: "Comey's book is strongest at its simplest, when it's just a straightforward memoir of a lawyer who has risen through the ranks of the Justice Department to be inside some of the most interesting crises of the post-9/11 era. It's filled with the fun, anodyne details that make Washington memoirs so human: How the 6-foot, 8-inch Comey, used to ducking to enter the Situation Room's low doorway, miscalculated one day while wearing a taller-than-normal pair of shoes and cracked his head on the door jamb, and then spent the briefing hoping President George W. Bush wouldn't notice that his head was bleeding. Or how the famously prudish John Ashcroft chastised him for using the word 'turd' in another meeting." <https://rol.st/2H4lt4d>

... AND ON CURRENCY DEVALUATION at 8:31 a.m.: "Russia and China are playing the Currency Devaluation game as the U.S. keeps raising interest rates. Not acceptable!"

-- **Context from WaPo's Damian Paletta:** "The accusation, delivered without any evidence or corroboration, directly contradicts a report issued Friday by Trump's Treasury Department, which did not accuse either country of artificially lowering the value of its currency. Instead, the report found China's currency had recently moved in a direction that should benefit U.S. exporters." <https://wapo.st/2H6jj5i>

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PRUITT'S PROBLEMS ...

-- **WAPO:** "The [EPA] administrator installed a \$43,000 soundproof phone booth at agency headquarters last fall. An investigation by the Government Accountability Office found that the installation violated the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, which prohibits an agency from paying more than \$5,000 to redecorate or furnish a presidential appointee's office without approval." <https://wapo.st/2qBoG6h>

ON THE WORLD STAGE -- "Chemical weapons experts blocked from Syrian attack site, U.K. says," by CNN's Jamie Tarabay and Angela Dewan: "A fact-finding team from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) arrived in Syria on Saturday, the same day the U.S., U.K. and France carried out airstrikes against Syrian government targets in response to the April 7 attack in Douma.

"But by Monday, the team had still not been granted safe passage, according to the U.K. envoy to the OPCW, Peter Wilson. The U.S. expressed concerns that Russia may have tampered with evidence at the site." <https://cnn.it/2IZmE6E>

TRUMP INC. -- "Trump businesses made millions off Republican groups and federal agencies, report says," by McClatchy's Anita Kumar: "President Donald Trump's U.S. businesses have received at least \$15.1 million in revenue from political groups and federal agencies since 2015, according to a new report to be released Monday.

"The money went to Trump's airplanes, hotels, golf courses, even a bottled water company during the presidential campaign and the first 15 months of his presidency, according to a compilation of known records of the spending by Public Citizen obtained by McClatchy. But it was Trump's campaign itself that spent the biggest chunk by far -- about 90 percent, or \$13.4 million." <http://bit.ly/2H5jFZV>

THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL EX-CADDY -- ROBERT DRAPER in The New York Times Magazine: **"Dan Scavino, the Secretary of Offense":** "[N]ow that [Trump's supporters] had turned out for Trump and he was America's 45th president, what did he still need Scavino for? I spent the next six months trying to find out, even as the ranks of 'originals' dwindled. Keith Schiller left in September.

"Soon after Hope Hicks exited the building on March 29, Scavino -- now the longest-tenured Trump employee in the White House -- took over her office, just outside the Oval. By these measures, he was one of the most powerful people in Washington, despite the fact that no one could explain what Scavino did for a living. ...

"One of Scavino's main roles is the care and feeding of his boss's ego. He has learned how to fend off any negativity with a ready supply of superlatives. ... Scavino, Hicks told me, would 'tell him how things are playing with his people. That's a gauge for him that the president takes seriously.' Checking in with the base is as easy as looking at his phone.

"Scavino's old friend offered an example: 'Dan would scroll through his Twitter feed and if Franklin Graham says something particularly complimentary, he'll say, 'Look what Franklin Graham just wrote.' Or if [CNN show host] Brian Stelter says something particularly stupid, he'll run over and say, 'Look what Fake News is doing.'"

<https://nyti.ms/2H4IEfQ>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Report for America Supports Journalism Where Cutbacks Hit Hard," by NYT's Nellie Bowles: "Report for America, a nonprofit organization modeled after AmeriCorps, aims to install 1,000 journalists in understaffed newsrooms by 2022. Now in its pilot stage, the initiative has placed three reporters in Appalachia. It has chosen nine more, from 740 applicants, to be deployed across the country in June."

<https://nyti.ms/2H2Y5ox>

OUT AND ABOUT IN LOS ANGELES ... ROB and **MICHELLE REINER** hosted a book party for Obama alum Pat Cunnane's "West Winging It: An Unpresidential Memoir" (**\$16.80 on Amazon** <https://amzn.to/2H2k834>). Rob and Pat talked about getting involved in the midterms. **SPOTTED:** Bobby Schmuck, Ferial Govashiri, Jeremy Bernard, "The Post" producer Tim White, Madeleine Dean (candidate for Pennsylvania's fourth congressional and the author's mother) and CAA TV agent Jonas Brooks.

SPOTTED: Ed Henry with Nats manager Dave Martinez in the Nats locker room on Sunday on 42 Day, in which all MLB players wore 42. Henry wrote "42" about Jackie Robinson. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2qAqtbD>

TRANSITIONS -- Darci Vetter was named general manager for public affairs in Edelman's D.C. office. She was previously a consultant on international trade and was the chief agricultural negotiator in the office of the U.S. Trade Representative. ... **Casey Black** started on Monday as press secretary for Sen. David Perdue (R-Ga.). She most recently was press secretary for Rep. David Kustoff (R-Tenn.) and previously was on Sen. Bob Corker's (R-Tenn.) comms team. ... CNN hired **Sarah Westwood** to cover the White House. ... **The Obama Foundation** announced its inaugural class of fellows. The 20 fellows represent 11 different countries. **Full list of fellows** <http://bit.ly/2IZTnbU>

ENGAGED -- Sam Jammal, Democratic candidate for Congress in California's 39th

district and an alum of Tesla, the Obama Administration and Capitol Hill, proposed to **Jennifer Molina**, press secretary for California Attorney General Xavier Becerra and alum of the Clinton campaign and the Center for American Progress. The proposal took place as a surprise at the Brooklyn Bridge in New York, where Jennifer was doing a photo shoot with her family. They are both already on their way back to California.

Instapics <http://bit.ly/2qzYBEw>

-- **Quentin Scholtz**, legislative aide to Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), recently proposed to **McKinley Mason**, executive assistant to the Secretary of the Senate Julie Adams. "He proposed at the site of the original Capitol Columns located in the National Arboretum to signify the place they first met, working in the Capitol." **Pics by Hannah Yoest** <http://bit.ly/2H2VIHW> ... **The ring** <http://bit.ly/2JL0ITq> ... **The proposal** <http://bit.ly/2GYzq4N>

-- **Matt Flunker**, digital director on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and former digital and press aide to Gov. Walker's gubernatorial and presidential campaigns, as well as in his official office, proposed to **Rachel Miller**, a traveling nurse. The couple met at UW-Madison. "He proposed in Georgetown along the water. Then he had her family and a few friends fly in and after he asked, which was also a surprise." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2ITcOTy>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - BUSH ALUMNI: **Jonathan Felts**, the last WH political director under Bush 43 and now a public affairs consultant in Raleigh, and **Courtney Felts**, a speechwriter for U.S. Chamber of Commerce, on Wednesday welcomed Truman Beckett Felts. "Courtney worked to try to set a new record for delivery time arriving at the hospital at 4:50 and delivering 46 minutes later (not a record -- Maxwell beat him by a minute)." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2GZXE2r> ... <http://bit.ly/2HfiQ43>

BONUS BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: **Tom Johnson** (@TomMJohnsonJr), general counsel of the FCC. **A fun fact about Tom:** "I met President Nixon trick-or-treating at his home in Park Ridge, New Jersey, in 1993 -- the year before he died. Instead of candy, the President gave out signed cards wishing kids a Happy Halloween. My only regret is that I didn't go as Kissinger." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <https://politi.co/2HpGPxf>

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From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 6/22/2017 10:41:14 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Starbucks: WHAT THE SENATE secret health care bill would do – PELOSI facing 'growing doubts' from Dems -- JAY SOLOMON fired from WSJ for ties to arms dealer -- GRASSLEY embraces oversight role on Trump -- B'DAY: Brit Hume

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Starbucks
06/22/2017 06:35 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Thursday morning. SPOTTED -- IVANKA TRUMP dining alone with Alibaba's Jack Ma at Fiola Mare Wednesday night.

THE NEW NORM -- @jdawsey1: "No camera or recording allowed [today] at White House briefing with spokeswoman Sarah Sanders, per advisory."

-- **COMPARE AND CONTRAST** : On Capitol Hill, GOP leaders brief reporters multiple times a week on camera and take dozens of questions. Reporters are allowed to approach any lawmaker in the hallway at any time. The White House, on the other hand, is making it extraordinarily difficult for reporters to do their job.

BUZZ -- ALWAYS BE SELLING: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has started to meet with industry groups to preview the GOP health care bill. The bill is expected to be posted this morning at 11 a.m.

-- **WAO** got a draft copy of the bill: The bill will "curtail federal Medicaid funding, repeal taxes on the wealthy and eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood..."
<http://wapo.st/2sTw275>

-- **"What's in the Senate's secret Obamacare repeal bill,"** by Jen Haberkorn:
<http://politi.co/2sTbECW>

THE REALITY -- "Health bill could show limits of Trump's Senate sway," by Josh Dawsey, Burgess Everett, Tara Palmeri and Eliana Johnson: "President Donald Trump is starting to whip votes for the Senate health bill, but he could find his influence there is

more limited than in the House of Representatives, where he cajoled, cursed and wooed members to vote for his top campaign promise. Aides to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell were set to brief White House staffers Wednesday evening on the details of the bill they've been writing in secret, before it is expected to be made public Thursday. The president is expected to endorse their plan to repeal Obamacare. But even with Trump's help, the bill faces a perilous path in the Senate.

"Trump called Sen. Rand Paul Tuesday to see if he could be convinced to back the bill. Paul said he gave Trump no guarantees he'd vote for the bill, which he described as too much like Obamacare. 'We might have to play golf again,' Paul told POLITICO as he recounted their conversation. 'If it doesn't work for Alaska, it doesn't make any difference who's calling me,' said Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), preemptively dismissing any attempt by Trump to twist her arm; she said he hasn't reached out yet. Murkowski and Paul are two of the senators who are most skeptical of the health legislation, though they have different complaints." <http://politi.co/2rYvCbF>

THINGS COULD GET TRICKY FAST -- "How the GOP could go nuclear on Obamacare repeal," by Seung Min Kim: <http://politi.co/2sX3YQK>

THE BAD NEWS BABES beat the members of Congress 2-1 in the Congressional Women's Softball Game. A report from the scene from Playbook's producer Zach Montellaro: "The biggest moment of the night was when Crystal Griner, one of the Capitol Police officers injured in last week's shooting, threw out the first pitch after just being released from the hospital (**video from third base coach Frank Thorp** <http://bit.ly/2rEI9Bx>) . The game raised over \$300,000 for the Young Survival Coalition, a charity that supports young women diagnosed with breast cancer.

"Crowds filled up the Watkins Recreation Center, and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) brought a particularly large cheering section (**The rosters** <http://bit.ly/2sXSGvg>). Retiring Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) got a special acknowledgment from the game announcers Andrea Mitchell, Dana Bash and Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), who ran a funny running commentary all night. The two journalists joked that this was the one time they didn't have to be impartial towards Congress.

"Speaker Paul Ryan came onto the field before the game to wish both teams well. Despite a couple of injuries on the basepaths, everyone was in a light mood.

SPOTTED: House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Cali.) and House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.), and Reps. Charlie Dent (R-Pa.), Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.) and Diane Black (R-Tenn.). Kellyanne Conway made an appearance from the White House."

PICS -- The two teams <http://bit.ly/2rE9qwA> ... **The lawmakers with team photographers** <http://bit.ly/2rEIYde> ... **The press team** <http://bit.ly/2rEFho9> ... **Ryan talking with the press team** <http://bit.ly/2sXsy3y> ... **First base coach Rep. Ed Perlmutter (D-Colo.) high-fiving Gillibrand** <http://bit.ly/2sXMbsj>

ABOUT LAST NIGHT -- "Trump speaks of promises kept, victories to come," by Matt Nussbaum: "President Donald Trump, buoyed by a pair of special election wins for House Republicans on Tuesday, celebrated Wednesday at a campaign rally Cedar Rapids, Iowa, before a raucous and adoring crowd. He defended his administration, castigated the press, mocked Democrats, boasted of his achievements so far and praised his supporters.

"In remarks that stretched for over an hour, Trump -- appearing relaxed and at ease -- even floated a twist to his signature policy idea, one that he had only previously offered to lawmakers at the White House. Perhaps the great Southern border wall that was a foundation of his campaign could be a 'solar wall,' he suggested, adding that way it might pay for itself. 'Pretty good imagination,' Trump said of himself, after floating the idea to the crowd.

"He also defended the wealth of some of his highest aides, including top economic adviser Gary Cohn and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross. 'In those particular positions, I just don't want a poor person,' Trump said, in what appeared to be an off-the-cuff line. And, to the crowd's delight, Trump heaped praise upon his supporters. 'We have the hardest working, the smartest people, the toughest people,' Trump said. 'They're very lucky that our people don't protest, believe me, they're very lucky.' ... [F]or old time's sake, he even blasted his general election opponent, Hillary Clinton, announcing that no one knew what she stood for on Election Day other than that she was against him. Some in the crowd began to chant, 'Lock her up!' 'Who cares?' Trump responded to the chant." <http://politi.co/2rU8qQk>

-- GREAT LINES FROM NYT'S MAGGIE HABERMAN: "Free from his handlers for roughly 70 minutes, Mr. Trump described his administration as he wished it to be: one in which he had made historic governing accomplishments and been stymied solely by the 'resistance.' ...

"And the president frequently embellished details during his speech, or told outright falsehoods. He tried to catch himself at one point, saying, 'I have to be a little careful, because they'll say, 'He lied!' But he nonetheless plowed ahead, including misstating whether the Paris climate agreement, from which he plans to withdraw the United States, is binding. While doing so, he also prompted the audience to name the agreement themselves. 'P... p... p,' he said. 'Like hell it's nonbinding!' thundered Mr. Trump, who in fact called the accord nonbinding in his Rose Garden speech announcing the withdrawal this month." <http://nyti.ms/2rUsxxU>

-- DES MOINES REGISTER FRONT PAGE: "Trump rides high after GOP wins: President pledges support for agriculture ahead of raucous Cedar Rapids rally" **A1 PDF** <http://politi.co/2sYnoo0> ... **Jason Noble's story** <http://dmreg.co/2tR8ddj>

-- @BraddJaffy: "NBC's @alivitali confirms President Trump will hold his first re-election fundraiser at his own Washington D.C. hotel"

TIME'S NEW COVER featuring Robert Mueller -- "The Lie Detector: Someone's Not Telling the Truth": <http://bit.ly/2sC12q1>

***** **A message from Starbucks:** At Starbucks, we're always looking to create new opportunities for our workforce. Over the next five years, we'll create 68,000 new jobs and open more than 3,400 stores across the country. Also included: 100 new Military Family stores operated by veterans and military spouses to help bridge the civilian-military divide: <http://sbux.co/2mQ4AR0> *****

STAKING HIS TURF -- "Grassley embraces oversight role in Trump-Russia probe," by Seung Min Kim and Josh Gerstein: "In an interview with POLITICO Wednesday in his Capitol office, [Chuck] Grassley was the most definitive yet that his committee's probe will examine issues of obstruction of justice. 'I don't want to say for sure. But I don't know how you can avoid it,' Grassley said regarding questions of obstruction of justice in his investigation. 'Because the FBI was investigating it before there was a special counsel.' The Iowa senator, who took charge of the Judiciary panel two years ago, has been hammering out the parameters of an investigation with Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) on probing Comey's dismissal, as well as potential political interference at the Justice Department under the Obama administration. ... He's undaunted by the thought of provoking Trump: 'I can't look at whether the president is a Republican or a Democrat. My constitutional responsibility of oversight stays the same.'" <http://politi.co/2stioXC>

THE AFTERMATH -- "Pelosi faces growing doubts among Dems after Georgia loss: There's a lot of grumbling by rank-and-file members, but no leadership change is imminent," by John Bresnahan, Heather Caygle and Kyle Cheney: "House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and other top Democrats put a brave face on Wednesday morning after a disappointing loss in the Georgia special election, yet there is no disguising the unhappiness in the party ranks. There is no challenge to Pelosi's leadership, and none is going to happen at this point, said numerous Democrats. But it's clear frustration is growing with the longtime Democratic leader following the extensive losses Democrats have suffered over the past half-decade.

"And the fact that Republicans spent millions of dollars on TV ads tying Democratic hopeful Jon Ossoff to Pelosi - and the brand of progressive policies she represents - shows that she will once again be an issue for Democratic challengers in the very districts that the party needs to win to make her speaker again. Some Democrats want to replace Pelosi atop their caucus, as they have since last November's poor showing at the polls; they say there is no way to get back in the majority with her as their leader. And others who backed her in last year's leadership challenge have now flipped their stance." <http://politi.co/2twHtPJ>

-- "Democrats Seethe After Georgia Loss: 'Our Brand Is Worse Than Trump'," by NYT's Alex Burns and Jonathan Martin: "[T]he most acute and widely expressed concerns were economic. Speaking after a meeting of the Democratic caucus on

Wednesday morning, Representative Hakeem Jeffries of New York said the party was preparing to be 'aggressively focused on job creation and economic growth.' And Representative Jim Himes of Connecticut, who represents an affluent district near New York City, said Democrats must do more to compete with what he described as expansive and unrealistic promises by President Trump. 'It's not enough to say, 'I want jobs,' Mr. Himes said. 'You need more than that, particularly when you're competing with a guy who is telling fantasies.'" <http://nyti.ms/2rFEovF>

EVEN IN LANGLEY! - "A Bunch Of CIA Staff Got Fired For Stealing Snacks From Vending Machines," by BuzzFeed's Jason Leopold and David Mack: "Several CIA contractors were kicked out of the agency for stealing more than \$3,000 in snacks from vending machines, according to official documents newly obtained by BuzzFeed News. The thefts took place starting in the fall of 2012 and continued through March 2013, according to a declassified Office of Inspector General report from October 2013." <http://bzfd.it/2twlybx>

--TRUMP'S THURSDAY: Trump will participate in the American Leadership in Emerging Technology event in the morning. He is also expected to meet with the International Olympic Committee. In the evening, Trump and First Lady Melania Trump will host the Congressional Picnic.

THE JUICE ...

-- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: Cornell Belcher is joining NBC News and MSNBC as a political contributor. He was the first minority lead pollster for a national party, when he was pollster for the DNC under former chairman Howard Dean and worked on the Obama campaign polling teams.

-- SAVE MY CARE , in a five figure buy, is upping the ante on its opposition to the GOP health care bill sending two mailers to tens of thousands of voters in five states which have Republican senators: Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), Jeff Flake (Ariz.), Susan Collins (Maine), Dean Heller (Nev.) and Shelley Moore Capito (W.Va.). Some of the text of one of the mailer: "Senate Republicans are keeping a secret. Because they know you'll hate it. It's a 'health care' repeal plan that will cut coverage and raise costs." Last week, Save My Care launched TV and rural radio ads in targeted Senate states. **See the two mailers** <http://politi.co/2twzfqX> ... <http://politi.co/2sWTGQR>

-- MARK SCOTT to POLITICO Europe -- **MATT KAMINSKI** emails the staff: "We're thrilled to share some news this morning about our digital future: Mark Scott is POLITICO's new Chief Technology Correspondent. ... As the European Technology Correspondent for the New York Times, his professional home the past six years, Mark filed memorable stories on fake news, Europe's Google and privacy wars and the Apple-Ireland tax case. ... He'll continue to be based in London but will spend a lot of time in Brussels, other EU capitals and the U.S."

-- "In the Trump era, Obama nostalgia is a booming industry," by L.A. Times' Mike

Memoli: "Pat Cunnane spent six years in the White House helping to promote Barack Obama's message. From the outside, he still does: On Tuesday, Cunnane became the latest Obama alumnus to land a contract for a book on his experiences....

"Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, has signed on to publish Cunnane's recollections of his coming of age, starting at 22 years old, in the White House press office, a book tentatively called 'West Winging It: An Unpresidential Memoir.' 'For six years, working in the Obama White House was all I knew. When that came to an end a few months ago, let's just say I didn't take it well,' Cunnane said."

<http://lat.ms/2sX4TRo>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Capitol Police officer Crystal Griner, who was injured in last week's shooting at the Republican baseball practice, throws out the first pitch in the Congressional Women's Softball at Watkins Recreation Center on June 21. | Tom Williams / CQ Roll Call via AP Photo

MATT NUSSBAUM and JOSH DAWSEY -- "Priebus keeps tight grip on the RNC:

The chief of staff is staying deeply involved in RNC matters, despite having his hands full in the West Wing": "Priebus, who led the RNC from 2011 until he assumed the White House job earlier this year, has so far given little autonomy to his successor, Ronna Romney McDaniel, with one senior Republican operative close to the White House saying Priebus' control over the RNC is 'total and complete.'

"Priebus wants to be continually updated on fundraising numbers, potential candidates for office and polling numbers, according to one strategist with knowledge of the RNC. He repeatedly asked RNC officials about their strategy and plan for the Georgia special election and often gave input. Republicans won a narrow victory in the deep red district." <http://politi.co/2stczcw>

AU REVOIR -- "White House shows no sign of reopening Paris talks: Three weeks after Trump announced he's pulling the U.S. out of the climate accord, everyone is waiting for the White House to move forward," by Andrew Restuccia: "Three weeks after President Donald Trump pledged to pull the United States out of the Paris climate agreement and negotiate a better deal, foreign allies and U.S. officials alike remain perplexed about the White House's plans going forward.

"Two U.S. officials told POLITICO that senior White House aides, who are prioritizing health care legislation and increasingly preoccupied by the expanding Russia probe, have had very few internal conversations about the administration's Paris strategy since Trump's announcement. One official said the administration likely won't begin mapping out its next moves until after the July G20 summit in Hamburg,

Germany." <http://politi.co/2sXde7l>

DRAIN THE SWAMP! -- "Trump appointee is a Saudi government lobbyist," by the Center for Public Integrity's Carrie Levine: "One of President Donald Trump's newest appointees is a registered agent of Saudi Arabia earning hundreds of thousands of dollars to lobby on the kingdom's behalf, according to U.S. Department of Justice records reviewed by the Center for Public Integrity. Since January, the Saudi Arabian foreign ministry has paid longtime Republican lobbyist Richard Hohlt about \$430,000 in exchange for 'advice on legislative and public affairs strategies.' Trump's decision to appoint a registered foreign agent to the President's Commission on White House Fellowships clashes with the president's vow to clean up Washington and limit the influence of special interests." <http://bit.ly/2tQWZFB>

WHAT KENT KNUTSON IS READING -- "North Dakota's last Democrat?," by Burgess Everett in Wahpeton, N.D.: "Heidi Heitkamp still remembers the first time she led the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance after her surprising win in 2012. How hard it was to get the words out. 'I can't get through it because I'm too emotional,' she recalls to dozens of gangly teenagers graduating from the American Legion's Boys State program. 'How could a middle-aged, kind of a chubby woman, be standing in the United States Senate?' The 61-year-old Heitkamp survived a brutal bout with cancer amid a failed 2000 campaign for governor, then ran for the Senate 12 years later in a Republican-dominated state. And now she is staring down an exceedingly difficult reelection campaign in a state where President Donald Trump is beloved." <http://politi.co/2sEmuKW>

***** **A message from Starbucks:** At Starbucks, we're always looking to create new opportunities for our workforce. Over the next five years, we'll create 68,000 new jobs and open more than 3,400 stores across the country. Also included: 100 new Military Family stores operated by veterans and military spouses to help bridge the civilian-military divide: <http://sbux.co/2mQ4AR0> *****

VALLEY TALK - "How Uber Backers Orchestrated Kalanick's Ouster as CEO," by WSJ's Greg Bensinger and Maureen Farrell: "Mr. Kalanick was in Chicago on Tuesday to interview a candidate for his top deputy position when he received unexpected news about his future, according to people familiar with the matter. Matt Cohler and Peter Fenton, two partners at venture-capital firm Benchmark, one of Uber's biggest investors, flew out to Chicago to confront Mr. Kalanick, presenting him with a letter signed by five major shareholders. The letter demanded the 40-year-old CEO immediately resign after a series of scandals consumed the company, these people said. ... Mr. Kalanick ... is expected to remain an influential presence at the ride-hailing company: He will keep a seat on Uber's board of directors and he retains control of a majority of Uber's voting shares." <http://on.wsj.com/2rFw3l0>

MEDIAWATCH -- THE CRAZIEST MEDIA STORY IN A WHILE - "Wall Street Journal fires correspondent over ethics conflict," by AP's Jeff Horwitz, Jon Gambrell and Jack Gillum: "The Wall Street Journal on Wednesday fired its highly regarded chief

foreign affairs correspondent after evidence emerged of his involvement in prospective commercial deals - including one involving arms sales to foreign governments - with an international businessman who was one of his key sources. The reporter, Jay Solomon, was offered a 10 percent stake in a fledgling company, Denx LLC, by Farhad Azima, an Iranian-born aviation magnate who has ferried weapons for the CIA. ... During the course of its investigation, the AP obtained emails and text messages between Azima and Solomon, as well as an operating agreement for Denx dated March 2015, which listed an apparent stake for Solomon. ...

"I clearly made mistakes in my reporting and entered into a world I didn't understand.' Solomon told the AP on Wednesday. ... In an April 2015 email, Azima wrote to Solomon about a proposal for a \$725 million air-operations, surveillance and reconnaissance support contract with the United Arab Emirates that would allow planes to spy on activity inside nearby Iran. Solomon was supposed to ferry the proposal to UAE government representatives at a lunch the following day, the email said. 'We all wish best of luck to Jay on his first defense sale,' Azima wrote to Solomon [and two other colleagues]. ... In October 2014, Solomon wrote to Azima in a text message: 'Our business opportunities are so promising.' ... The emails show Solomon's relationship with Azima began professionally, as the reporter cultivated the businessman as a source of information about Iranian money in a Georgian hotel deal and other matters."

<http://apne.ws/2tRtX8T> ... **Read some of the source docs** <http://bit.ly/2rYsUTd>

-- THE AP INVESTIGATION OF AZIMA: 'Worth killing over': How a plane mogul dodged U.S. scrutiny <http://apne.ws/2rTPcdG>

--HADAS GOLD: "Washington Bureau Chief Paul Beckett made the announcement [that Solomon was fired] to staff during a hastily called meeting on Wednesday after meeting with senior editors in New York the day before. ... Beckett took no questions and asked any staffers who knew anything about the situation to come forward, according to multiple sources." <http://politi.co/2sX62lv>

-- "How The Guardian Lost America," by BuzzFeed's Steven Perlberg: "The Guardian's US newsroom didn't become the voice of the Bernie left during the election. It didn't break huge campaign scoops. Years after winning a Pulitzer for the Edward Snowden story, Guardian US has slashed costs, leaving employees stewing about mismanagement, infighting, a sexual harassment allegation, and unrealistic business expectations." <http://bzfd.it/2rXUiRkl>

Playbookers

SUNDAY SO FAR - "Fox News Sunday": Brit Hume is filling in for Chris Wallace: Mike Needham, Jennifer Griffin, Josh Holmes, Bob Woodward

SPOTTED: OMB Director Mick Mulvaney last night at Barcelona ... Nebraska Sen. Ben

Sasse dining at Bistro Cacao ... former Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz dining alfresco at The Bombay Club ... Ben Carson yesterday at "Home Runs for Horton's Kids" at Nats Park -- **14 second video** <http://bit.ly/2rU70VP> Sean Spicer was also seen taking batting practice later in the evening ... Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) sitting at the bar at Hank's Oyster Bar by himself post-softball game, nibbling on a salad ... Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.) and Nikki Haley, hanging out separately, at Le Diplomate.

BOOK PARTY CIRCUIT -- GEORGE LITTLE and the Brunswick Group held a book party last night for Garrett Graff's new book "Raven Rock: The Story of the U.S. Government's Secret Plan to Save Itself--While the Rest of Us Die". In a Q&A with George, Garrett told the crowd that one of his inspirations to write the book was because one of his former Washingtonian colleagues several years ago showed him a government badge he had found in a parking lot that had exact directions to a doomsday bunker in West Virginia. Garrett was intrigued so he followed the directions on Google Maps and discovered that even Google didn't know exactly what was there. **\$15.49 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2rFq1Yc> ... **Pic of Garrett and George** <http://bit.ly/2tRkUox> **SPOTTED:** Brian Hale, Mike Krempasky, Sam Feist, Peter Earnest, Marc Ross, Steve Heuser, Deborah Solomon, Evan Perez, Neil Irwin, Tal Kopan, Laura Jarrett, Del Wilber, Marc Raimondi, Jim Sciutto, Kevin Baron, Kate McCarroll.

OUT AND ABOUT -- Gloria Dittus of Story Partners and Suzanne Clark of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce co-hosted a dinner Wednesday night in honor of IFA Chairman Shelly Sun, founder and CEO of BrightStar Care, bringing together trade association reps, think tankers, lawmakers and political consultants to talk about labor and business policies. **SPOTTED:** Robert Cresanti, Matt Haller, Aric Newhouse, Brent Parton, Peter Schaumber, Chrissy Harbin, Rep. Rodney Davis (R-Ill.), Marty and Donna Davis, Marcus Peacock, Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.), Steven Law, Reem Alou and Jade West.

SPOTTED at the Innovation House last night for an event hosted by Mav PAC, with special guest Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa): Mav PAC national co-chairs Fritz Brogan and Morgan Ortagus, and D.C. board members Garrett Marquis, Chris May, James Fitzella, Robert Flock, and Sarah Curran. Also spotted: Dan Green, Charles McCray, Drew Aldridge, Elizabeth Rojas Levi and John Stanford.

SPOTTED last night at Tosca: a contingent from the Harry S. Truman Library talking about the importance of NATO with Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.), Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, President Truman's grandson Clifton Truman Daniel and Husch Blackwell partner Adam Sachs.

OUT AND ABOUT IN NYC -- SPOTTED at a Club for Growth event last night at the Harvard Club: Florida Gov. Rick Scott, David McIntosh, Art Laffer, and Larry Kudlow (all hosts), Shannon Bream, Alice Stewart, James Taranto, Jake Novak, Charlie Gasparino and David Asman.

TRANSITIONS -- Ferguson & Associates has hired veteran conservative **Bob Thompson** as regional VP of the mid-Atlantic and DC. From 1999 to last year, Bob was

the administrator of The Weyrich Lunch, "a weekly coalition meeting of conservative, pro-family, economic, national security, and foreign affairs organizations and leaders." ...

Tom Brandt has started as the new communications director for Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.). He previously worked in comms for Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Rep. Lynn Jenkins (R-Kan.), and Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.).

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Washington Post Live executive producer **Michael Falcone**, who joined the Post in May after more than six years at ABC News. Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2stvlLC>

BIRTHDAYS: Brit Hume is 74 (hat tip: James Rosen) ... VA Secretary David Shulkin is 58 ... Mary Jo Scarborough of Pensacola ... Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) is 68 ... Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) is 84 ... environmental activist Erin Brockovich is 57 ... AP White House reporter Jill Colvin (hubby tip: Jeremy Herb) ... GOP fundraiser Dana Harris ... Justice Clarence Thomas is 69 ... Rep. Adam B. Schiff (D-Calif.) is 57 ... ICANN's Carlos Reyes is 28 ... Megan Chan, WaPo's director of digital operations ... Kirk Whitworth ... James VandeHei is 13 ... Zach Stewart ... L.A. Times alum Andrew Malcolm, now national politics columnist for McClatchy ... Derek Hunter ... Bryan Jung ... Politico Europe alum Antoine Rolin ... Robert Sinners, special assistant at GSA ...

... **Pia Carusone** ... Pat Griffin, former Senate Secretary for the Democrats and proud grandfather (h/t Arjun Mody) ... Alisa Robbins Doctoroff, immediate past president of the UJA - Federation of New York, is 59 ... Andy Rubin, founder and CEO of tech incubator Playground Global, is 55 (h/ts Jewish Insider) ... Lauren Weiner, a principal at Precision Strategies (h/t Tom Zigo) ... Katie Byerly with Albright Stonebridge Group (h/t Robert Cogan) ... Politico's Kaitlyn Burton and Adrienne Hurst ... Bonny-Kate Ralston ... Chris Hofmann ... CBS News alum Jackie Adams ... CAP energy maven Luke Bassett ... Fox News' Brian Doherty ... Lori Kelley ... Kristie Robinson ... Zach Stewart (h/t Teresa Vilmain) ... Kyle Taylor is 36 ... John Romero ... Mike Moodian is 4-0 ... Mike Carter-Conneen ... Dustin Olson ... actress Prunella Scales ("Fawlty Towers") is 85 ... Kris Kristofferson is 81 ... Meryl Streep is 68 ... author Dan Brown is 53 ... Mary Lynn Rajskub of "24" fame is 46 ... Carson Daly is 44 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from Starbucks:** At Starbucks, we're always looking to create new opportunities for our workforce. Over the next five years, we'll create 68,000 new jobs and open more than 3,400 stores across the country. Also included: 100 new Military Family stores operated by veterans and military spouses to help bridge the civilian-military divide: <http://sbux.co/2mQ4AR0> *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Fri 9/8/2017 6:22:10 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence, presented by Service Year Alliance: Dent retains McCormick Group — Podestas hosting fundraiser for friend of the family — New name and new partners for Kountoupes Denham

By Theodoric Meyer | 09/08/2017 02:20 PM EDT

With David Beavers and Aubree Eliza Weaver

FIRST IN PI - DENT RETAINS McCORMICK GROUP: Rep. Charlie Dent, the moderate Pennsylvania Republican who announced on Thursday that he wouldn't run for an eighth term next year, already seems to be eyeing the future. Dent has retained **Ivan Adler** and **John Hesse** of the **McCormick Group**, who specialize in landing clients new jobs on K Street. Dent didn't respond to a request for comment.

PODESTAS HOSTING FUNDRAISER FOR FAMILY FRIEND RUNNING FOR CONGRESS: **Andrew Sneathern** is a little-known Charlottesville, Va., lawyer who's running for Congress against GOP Rep. Tom Garrett. He's a credible candidate, but he raised less than \$70,000 in the second quarter and is far from a lock to win the Democratic primary. (His rivals include **R.D. Huffstetler**, a Marine veteran who brought in nearly \$350,000 in the second quarter, and **Leslie Cockburn**, a longtime journalist and filmmaker who also happens to be the mother of **Olivia Wilde**.)

So it might seem a little surprising that two of the biggest Democratic names in town - **John** and **Tony Podesta** - are headlining a fundraiser for Sneathern on Sept. 21 in Washington. (John, of course, was **Hillary Clinton**'s campaign chairman and White House chief of staff under **Bill Clinton**; Tony is the chairman of the **Podesta Group**, one of the most prominent lobbying firms in Washington.) The explanation: "John and I know him well," Tony Podesta said in an interview. "He's a friend of the family and he married into the family. His mother-in-law is our first cousin." Sneathern's wife, **Larissa**, is a lawyer for **McGuireWoods**. That Sneathern is running to represent the district that includes Charlottesville is an added incentive to support him. "Everybody would love to do something to stand up on the other side of what happened in Charlottesville, and this is one way to do it," Podesta said.

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL & ROONEY SIGNS U.S. SUGAR: The **U.S. Sugar Corporation** has added **Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney** as its second Washington lobbying firm. It also retains **Capitol Counsel**.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Tips: tmeyer@politico.com. Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

**** A message from Service Year Alliance:** Hundreds of dinosaurs rallied at the Capitol to tell Congress to stop national service extinction. President Trump's budget proposes the elimination of national service programs like AmeriCorps. These dinosaurs have a clear message for Congress: Stop National Service Extinction and Let Us Serve. Learn more at LetUsServe.org. **

THE GLOBAL POLICY LAB: POLITICO Europe is launching Global Policy Lab, a first-of-its kind experiment in collaborative journalism that is expected to produce new policy solutions and inform the public debate on key issues. POLITICO readers are among the most engaged and educated in the world, and the Global Policy Lab will tap into their experience and knowledge to develop solutions to pressing challenges. POLITICO is partnering with GE on the first installment, titled Engineering Growth, to look at the rise of digital manufacturing in Germany, Europe's largest economy, and explore ways to improve the economies of France and the United Kingdom. **GET INVOLVED:** [Sign up to the weekly newsletter here.](#)

NEW NAME AND NEW PARTNERS FOR KOUNTOUPES DENHAM: Kountoupes Denham is now **Kountoupes Denham Carr & Reid** after the firm named **Julie Hershey Carr** and **Randi Reid** as partners. "Julie and Randi's elevation to partner is the culmination of years of hard work and a recognition of their invaluable contributions to the firm's steady growth," **Lisa Kountoupes**, the firm's founder and president, said in a statement. The change also marks the firm's 10-year anniversary.

- **Legend**, the digital shop led by **Mike Aleo** and **Matt Lockwood**, has also rebranded. The firm is now called **LGND** and launching a new [website](#). LGND has worked with companies including **Aetna**, the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** and **S&P Global**.

WHAT THE PODESTA GROUP'S CLIENTS ARE READING: The **Podesta Group's** digital arm, PG Digital, has sent its clients a new analysis of the Twitter activity of members of Congress and what it reveals about their positions on health care reform. One insight: "On Twitter, Republicans shared health care items from **Fox News** and **Fox Business Network** three times as often as the next most popular media outlet, rarely engaging with smaller conservative publications such as the **National Review**, **Daily Caller** or **Breitbart**." **Read the full report [here](#).**

IMGE ADDS FIVE AS MUSSER DEPARTS: "**Phil Musser**, the chairman and CEO of Republican digital firm **IMGE**, is leaving the company to become the senior vice president for communications at **Boeing** in Chicago - with the firm bringing on a host of big names to replace him," **POLITICO's Kevin Robillard** reports. "**Phil Cox**, like Musser a former executive director of the **Republican Governors Association**, is joining the firm as a partner and replacing Musser as chairman. **Ethan Eilon** will become the firm's president, with **Megan Foote**, currently the firm's vice president, becoming a partner and chief operating officer and assuming responsibility for the firm's day-to-day operations. **Gerrit Lansing**, the **RNC's** former chief digital officer, and **Gary Coby**, the Trump campaign's digital advertising and fundraising director, will become senior partners. **Marty Obst**, a longtime top aide to Vice President **Mike Pence**, is joining the firm as a senior adviser." [Full story.](#)

MEANWHILE, IN NEW YORK: "**Tech:NYC**, a 500-plus member lobbying organization created last year to advance tech industry interests in the city, is launching a website on Friday aimed at galvanizing what some industry leaders say is their employees' widespread outrage at recent actions by President **Donald Trump's** administration on immigration and just about everything else," **POLITICO New York's Laura Nahmias** reports. "The site, [dubbed 'Tech Takes Action'](#), bills itself as 'a tool for the New York tech community to stand up for our ideals.'"

The heads of eyeglasses company **Warby Parker**, which donates a pair of glasses for each one it sells, provided the financial resources to start up the site." [Full story](#).

- Warby Parker has been represented in Washington since 2015 by **Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer**, but the company doesn't spend much on lobbying. (It shelled out just \$10,000 in the second quarter.)

JOBS REPORT:

- **Rob Green** has returned to the House Education Committee as workforce policy director. He was previously the executive director of the **National Council of Chain Restaurants**.

- **Jack d'Annibale** is leaving the Hill to become as senior counselor at **Vectis Strategies**, based in Los Angeles and Washington. He was previously communications director for Rep. [Ted Lieu](#) (D-Calif.).

- **Noah Marine** has joined the government relations team at **Travelers**. He was previously legislative director for Rep. [Ed Perlmutter](#) (D-Colo.) and has also worked for the **Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association** and the **American Bankers Association**.

- **The Normandy Group** has added **John Goldberg** as a partner. He was previously the chief science adviser to the House Agriculture Committee.

SPOTTED: At an event hosted by **The Washington Post** and the **Senate Press Secretaries Association** Thursday night at The Post's headquarters and sponsored by the **National Restaurant Association**, according to a PI tipster: **Marty Baron**, The Post's executive editor; **Fred Ryan**, The Post's publisher; White House deputy press secretary **Lindsay Walters**; White House Deputy Director of Communications **Jessica Ditto**; **Annie Clark** of Sen. [Susan Collins](#)' office; Jon Kott of Sen. [Joe Manchin](#)'s office; **Cassie Smedile** of the **Republican National Committee**; **Charles Small**, who's Los Angeles Mayor **Eric Garcetti**'s man in Washington; **Sergio Gor** of Sen. [Rand Paul](#)'s office; **Lizzie Litzow** of Rep. [Michael McCaul](#)'s office; **Steve Danon** and **Leslie Shedd** of the National Restaurant Association; and Post reporters including **Philip Rucker**, **Robert Costa** and **Michael Falcone**.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

None

NEW PACs:

None

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney Pc: U.S. Sugar Corporation
Eris Group (formerly known as Bartlett & Bendall): TheCityUK

Federal Advocates, Inc.: Yazbeck Consulting and Investment Group
Greenberg Traurig, LLP: Bankers Financial Corporation
Jones Walker, LLP: SEACOR Holdings, Inc.
Mehlman Castagnetti Rosen & Thomas, Inc.: Entertainment Cruises Holdings LLC
Miller Strategies, LLC: Sondhi Solutions
Robbins Ross Alloy Belinfante Littlefield LLC: Celebration Leadership Council
The Russell Group, Inc.: Story Partners (on behalf of the Coalition to Modernize Meat & Poultry Safety)
Viking Navigation LLC: Anacostia Rail Holdings Company
Viking Navigation LLC: Kansas Department of Commerce
Viking Navigation LLC: OmniTRAX, Inc.

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

CML Consulting Services Inc. (formerly L.A. Skip Bafalis): Alcalde & Fay (TigerSwan)
Kinder Morgan, Inc.: Kinder Morgan, Inc.
Liz Williams and Company: FAA Managers Association
Northwind Strategies: Anbaric Transmission Holding Company
Northwind Strategies: Northwind Strategies

**** A message from Service Year Alliance:** 80,000 young people serve every year with AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, and YouthBuild. They're fighting the opioid epidemic, supporting our veterans, teaching in underperforming schools, and responding to natural disasters. In fact, hundreds of AmeriCorps members are already on the ground in Texas helping respond after Hurricane Harvey. If President Trump's budget becomes reality, national service programs like AmeriCorps will go extinct. Service Year Alliance and hundreds of national service supporters dressed as dinosaurs rallied at the Capitol to stop national service extinction and tell Congress to Let Us Serve. Learn more at LetUsServe.org. **

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-influence/2017/09/08/dent-retains-mccormick-group-222191>

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From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Wed 5/10/2017 11:02:54 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by PhRMA: COMEY is OUT -- BACK-STORY from DAWSEY on why an 'ENRAGED' Trump fired Comey -- What Trump needs to do next -- POTUS' only agenda item today: meeting with Russian foreign minister -- RUSSIA investigations plod along

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by PhRMA
05/10/2017 06:57 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

-

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GOOD (VERY EARLY) MORNING FROM SAN FRANCISCO. If you're a betting man or woman, and you're looking for action in Washington this spring, summer or fall, short the legislative system. If President Donald Trump was looking to foster a spirit of bipartisanship, firing FBI Director James Comey like this was not a step toward kumbaya. Democrats and many Republicans are furious at Trump for firing the FBI director. Leave aside any lingering concerns with Jim Comey's performance. The optics of firing Comey the way Trump did is almost too reckless to believe, according to the insiders we've spoken to. One senior Republican aide put it this way: It's almost as if Trump was courting controversy with both parties by handling the situation the way he did.

SURE, Democrats aren't wild about the guy. But if Trump really thought that would insulate him from backlash, boy, he was wrong.

SENATE INTELLIGENCE CHAIRMAN Richard Burr (R-N.C.), who is leading the Senate's Russia probe, said he was "troubled by the timing and reasoning of Director Comey's termination." Burr added in a tweet that "Dir. Comey has been more forthcoming w/ information than any FBI Director I can recall in my tenure on the congressional intel committees."

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-Ariz.) said he was "disappointed" by Trump's action and renewed his call for a special congressional committee to investigate Russia's attempts to influence the American political system. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), a Trump ally, said Comey's "removal at this particular time will raise questions." Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.), up for reelection next year, said on Twitter that "I've spent the last several hours trying to find an acceptable rationale for the timing of Comey's firing. I just can't do it." Imagine the fallout if Trump did this when the House was in session.

SENATE DEMOCRATS - who raised Nixon, Watergate and the infamous "Saturday Night Massacre" all Tuesday night - will hold a special caucus meeting on Wednesday morning to discuss the situation. This is a juicy detail from Austin Wright and Seung Min Kim: "Schumer has also asked Democrats to sit at their desks inside the chamber when the Senate convenes Wednesday morning as McConnell delivers the opening remarks 'to hear what, if anything, McConnell has to say about Comey's firing,' according to one senior Senate Democratic aide." **Full story** <http://politi.co/2pyPi5b>

TRUMP SPEAKS -- @realDonaldTrump at 10:42 p.m.: "Cryin' Chuck Schumer stated recently, 'I do not have confidence in him (James Comey) any longer.' Then acts so indignant. #draintheswamp"

IN THE SHORT TERM, the questions are as follows: 1) Why was Comey fired? 2) What does it mean for the FBI's Russia probe? 3) Who will replace Comey at the FBI and when? Andrew McCabe, the acting director, is already the subject of an FBI IG investigation, after Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe helped his wife raise \$500,000 for public office.

MAYBE Trump never forgave Comey for initially clearing Clinton of criminal charges last July. Comey did say last week that he had no regrets about his handling of the Clinton probe. Maybe Trump wasn't happy that Comey and the FBI weren't doing more to uncover who leaked information about the Trump campaign's ties to Russian officials. Maybe Trump just got sick of Russia, Russia, Russia on TV all the time.

-- WHAT TRUMP NEEDS : It's pretty simple. Trump needs a Neil Gorsuch-like figure at the FBI. That's not easy. The Supreme Court justice was Trump's biggest political win as president. Republicans won't rubber stamp just anyone at the FBI. Trump needs to find a figure that lawmakers can rally around.

-- JUST SAYING...: Trump has now fired Preet Bharara, Sally Yates and James Comey. What do all three have in common? They were investigating Trump.

-- TO HIS CREDIT: Trump did call Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), ranking member on Judiciary, before the firing was announced. (Thanks to Bres for the help/gut check.)

-- **HOT DOCS:** Letter from Trump to Comey firing him, Sessions' letter to Trump, memo to Sessions from deputy attorney general Rod Rosenstein with the title "Restoring Public Confidence in the FBI" <http://bit.ly/2r136q7>

FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS -- NYT A1, including an image of the letter Trump sent to Comey firing him. <http://nyti.ms/2q2BdAa> ... WaPo gives it the full banner treatment: "Trump fires FBI director" <http://bit.ly/2pvF8kP>

TRUMP'S ONLY SCHEDULE ITEM TODAY: A meeting with Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov in the Oval at 10:30 a.m.

MUST-READ JOSH DAWSEY -- "Behind Comey's firing: An enraged Trump, fuming about Russia": "President Donald Trump weighed firing his FBI director for more than a week. When he finally pulled the trigger Tuesday afternoon, he didn't call James Comey. He sent his longtime private security guard [Keith Schiller] to deliver the termination letter in a manila folder to FBI headquarters. He had grown enraged by the Russia investigation, two advisers said, frustrated by his inability to control the mushrooming narrative around Russia. He repeatedly asked aides why the Russia investigation wouldn't disappear and demanded they speak out for him. He would sometimes scream at television clips about the probe, one adviser said.

"Trump's firing of the high-profile FBI director on the 110th day since taking office marked another sudden turn for an administration that has fired its acting attorney general, national security adviser and now its FBI director, who Trump had praised until recent weeks and even blew a kiss to during a January appearance."
<http://politi.co/2py47Fc>

-- **WaPo's DEVLIN BARRETT, ADAM ENTOUS and PHIL RUCKER:** "Several current and former officials said the relationship between the White House and the FBI had been strained for months, in part because administration officials were pressuring Comey to more aggressively pursue leak investigations over disclosures that embarrassed the White House and raised questions about ties with Russia. That pressure was described as conversational challenges to FBI leadership to pursue the source of leaks seen as damaging to the administration ... Although the FBI is investigating disclosures of classified information, the bureau has resisted calls to prioritize leak investigations over the Russia matter, or probe matters that did not involve leaks of classified or otherwise sensitive information ... A current official said administration figures have been 'very aggressive' in pressuring the FBI."
<http://wapo.st/2r0risZ>

***** **A message from PhRMA: Patients share the costs of medicines. They should share the savings.** Robust negotiations between biopharmaceutical companies and insurers often result in significant rebates and discounts. Insurers should share more of these rebates with patients. Providing access to discounted prices at the point of sale could dramatically lower patients' out-of-pocket costs. Learn more at <http://onphr.ma/2pdaE7m>. *****

BEING THERE -- "After Trump fired Comey, his staff scrambled to explain why,"

by WaPo's Jenna Johnson with Bob Costa: Sean Spicer had wanted to drop the bombshell news in an emailed statement but it was not transmitting quickly enough, so he ended up standing in the doorway of the press office around 5:40 p.m. and shouting a statement to reporters who happened to be gathered in the briefing room. He then vanished, with his staff locking the door leading to his office. The press staff said that Spicer might do a briefing, then announced that he definitely wouldn't say anything more that night. But as Democrats and Republicans began to criticize and question the firing with increasing levels of alarm, Spicer and two prominent spokeswomen were suddenly speed-walking up the White House drive to defend the president on CNN, Fox News and Fox Business ...

"After Spicer spent several minutes hidden in the bushes behind these sets ,

Janet Montesi, an executive assistant in the press office, emerged and told reporters that Spicer would answer some questions, as long as he was not filmed doing so. Spicer then emerged. 'Just turn the lights off. Turn the lights off,' he ordered. 'We'll take care of this... Can you just turn that light off?' Spicer got his wish and was soon standing in near darkness between two tall [shrubs], with more than a dozen reporters closely gathered around him. For 10 minutes, he responded to a flurry of questions, vacillating between light-hearted asides and clear frustration with getting the same questions over and over again." <http://wapo.st/2q29fV1>

BACK STORY -- NYT's Mike Shear and Matt Apuzzo: "Mr. Comey learned from news reports that he had been fired while addressing bureau employees in Los Angeles. While Mr. Comey spoke, television screens in the background began flashing the news. In response to the reports, Mr. Comey laughed, saying that he thought it was a fairly funny prank." <http://nyti.ms/2pvIVQt>

-- BEFORE HIS FIRING, COMEY was supposed to speak last night in Hollywood at a recruiting event for FBI special agents where one could "receive personal career counseling from FBI Special Agents, and interact with representatives from FBI Los Angeles speciality programs, including: CSI(Evidence Response Team), Behavioral Profilers, SWAT, Bomb Technicians, Crisis Negotiators, and more**." The event page also noted: "***Due to often unforeseen operational demands, some program representatives may be unavailable for some or all portions of the event." <http://bit.ly/2piHtoi>

--HIS LAST GOVERNMENT FLIGHT? -- COMEY flew in a Gulfstream G5 last night from LAX and landed at DCA at 1:24 a.m. this morning. <http://bit.ly/2q2wM8a> (h/t Yashar Ali @Yashar)

THE AFTERMATH -- "FBI agents in tears as news of Comey's firing spread," by Josh Meyer and Darren Samuelsohn: "The news of FBI director James Comey's firing struck like a thunderclap at field offices around the country, where agents heard first from TV or the internet that their boss had been dismissed by President Donald J.

Trump. 'I'm literally in tears right now. That's all I have to say,' said a longtime special agent who's known and worked with Comey for years, who first heard the news on the car radio. ... By Tuesday evening, the shock that initially spread throughout the ranks of current and former FBI officials was mixed with a growing sense of anger among the many Comey loyalists in the bureau, and demands for answers as to why the director had been fired - and why now." <http://politi.co/2py4IXl>

THE INVESTIGATIONS CONTINUE -- "Grand jury subpoenas issued in FBI's Russia investigation," by CNN's Evan Perez, Shimon Prokupecz and Pamela Brown: "Federal prosecutors have issued grand jury subpoenas to associates of former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn seeking business records, as part of the ongoing probe of Russian meddling in last year's election, according to people familiar with the matter. CNN learned of the subpoenas hours before President Donald Trump fired FBI director James Comey. The subpoenas represent the first sign of a significant escalation of activity in the FBI's broader investigation begun last July into possible ties between Trump campaign associates and Russia." <http://cnn.it/2q1MUqf>

-- "Senate Russia investigators ask Treasury for Trump team financial information," by CNN's Tom LoBianco: "Senate Russia investigators have sent a request to the Treasury Department's criminal investigation division for any information related to President Donald Trump, his top officials and his campaign aides, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee told CNN Tuesday." <http://cnn.it/2pybT1F>

TOP TWEETS -- @EricHolder: "To the career men and women at DOJ/FBI: you know what the job entails and how to do it. Be strong and unafraid. Duty. Honor. Country." ... **@PreetBharara:** "EVERYONE who cares about independence & rule of law in America should be 'troubled by the timing and reasoning' of Comey firing. Period." ... **@BillKristol:** "One can be at once a critic of Comey and alarmed by what Trump has done and how he has done it." ... **@thomaswright08:** "On Fox, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, deputy WH press secretary says time to let Russia investigation go." ... **@sahilkapur:** "This @andersoncooper eyeroll when Conway, asked about Comey's firing, changes the topic to winning Michigan." <http://bit.ly/2qpXvwO> ...

... **@RobbyMook:** "Twilight zone. I was as disappointed and frustrated as anyone at how the email investigation was handled. But this terrifies me." ... **GOP Rep. Justin Amash (Mich.) (@justinamash):** "My staff and I are reviewing legislation to establish an independent commission on Russia. The second paragraph of this letter is bizarre." ... **GOP Rep. Carlos Curbelo (Fla.) (@carloslcurbelo):** "No one should find out via the television that they've been fired. If true, that's poor form and plain unprofessional. #Comey"

PLAYBOOK INTERVIEW -- We are in San Francisco for a conversation this evening with House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra and Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.). Thank you to everyone who has RSVP'ed -- it will be a packed house. We expect they'll make news. **Livestream at 5 p.m. Pacific**

<http://politi.co/2qqbW3O>

-- **D.C. EXPATS** -- and some who still are among us -- gathered at the Rosewood Sand Hill last night. **SPOTTED:** Ted Ulyot, Chelsea Maughan, Kip Wainscott and Amy Dudley, Bert Kaufman, Amanda Renteria, Ben Clark, Lisa Barclay, Molly Levinson and Anne O'Leary.

BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF CONGRESS -- "California takes center stage in battle for House majority," by Alex Isenstadt and Gabe Debenedetti: "California has emerged as the epicenter of the already-intense battle for the House in 2018, as both parties rush resources and manpower to a state that could determine the chamber's balance of power. With 18 months still to go until the election, Democrats and Republicans are mapping out TV advertising plans across the state, setting up headquarters, digging into polling, and hiring operatives. The showdown has swiftly drawn in Hollywood players, major donors and grass-roots activists. California is home to seven vulnerable Republican incumbents in districts where Hillary Clinton beat Donald Trump - more than a quarter of the seats Democrats need to flip."

<http://politi.co/2q20B92>

WHERE HEALTH CARE STANDS -- NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- "Poll: Support for GOP health bill declines," by Steven Shepard: "The popularity of the Republican health care bill declined over the past week even as its chances of becoming law improved after its passage by the House, underscoring the political peril President Donald Trump and the GOP face in their efforts to repeal and replace Obamacare. Voters have low expectations - few believe the bill, if enacted, will make the U.S. health care system better, increase the number of Americans with health coverage, improve the quality of their own care or decrease the costs for them and their family.

"And as the Senate prepares to take up the legislation, the POLITICO/Morning Consult also shows declines in voters' views of Trump's job performance and his party's standing in next year's congressional elections. Only 38 percent of voters approve of the GOP-drafted health care bill, the new poll shows - down from 42 percent last week, prior to the House's party-line vote to advance the measure. Forty-four percent of voters disapprove of the bill, up significantly from 37 percent last month. Eighteen percent of voters say they don't know or have no opinion of the bill." <http://politi.co/2qqq50R>

-- **READING THE TEA LEAVES** : We've spent a lot of time since the House passed their health care bill talking about the Senate's process. It could be a months long slog. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell took to the mics Tuesday afternoon to clarify how his conference will address the issue. McConnell said that GOP lawmakers' weekly meetings "Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, for the foreseeable future are going to be devoted almost entirely to the health care issue and everybody's a part of the discussion." Further, the Kentucky Republican pushed back on the narrative that the working group is all-men. "Well, the working group that counts, is all 52 of us, and we're having extensive meetings, as I said a few minutes ago, every day. Nobody's being

excluded based upon gender," he said.

THE JUICE...

-- **JENNA SAKWA**, a longtime CBS News hand, is heading to Speaker Paul Ryan's office as the head of media affairs. From the speaker's suite: "She succeeds Sarah Swinehart, who departed recently for a position with Edelman. Sakwa joins the speaker's office after nearly seven years with CBS News where she was most recently an editorial producer for CBS This Morning. Sakwa will lead the speaker's broadcast media efforts, including TV and radio booking, as well as manage his media-related events."

-- **RET. LT. GEN. JAMES CLAPPER**, former Director of National Intelligence, has joined the Center for a New American Security as the distinguished senior fellow for intelligence and national security. <http://bit.ly/2q2tkKN>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: A still frame from video provided by KABC-TV shows the motorcade carrying former FBI Director James Comey in traffic en route to Los Angeles International Airport after he was fired by President Donald Trump on May 9. | KABC-TV via AP

IF YOU READ ONE THING -- GARRETT GRAFF, author of the book "**The Threat Matrix: The FBI at War in the Age of Global Terror**," in **Politico Magazine**, "**The Political Isolation of Jim Comey**": "Jim Comey learned Tuesday afternoon the difference between being independent and being out on a limb. After years of charting his own course in a city that prides itself on loyalty, after marching to the beat of his own drum in a political culture that's increasingly divided into teams, after making up the rules as he went along in a Justice Department that prides itself on precedent and tradition, the FBI director found this week that he had run out of time and run out of friends. ... [I]t will be years before [the FBI's] public reputation recovers from the intense political firestorm that Comey plunged it into last summer with a fateful news conference. ... In the end, perhaps that will be remembered as Comey's greatest sin. He forgot the most important lesson of his post: In Washington, FBI directors should be like children-seen but not heard." <http://politi.co/2pymIRq>

-- **TODD S. PURDUM**, "**Trump pulls from Nixon's playbook**": "[N]ot since that 'Saturday Night Massacre' more than 40 years ago has a sitting president dared to fire an official in the middle of investigating potential misconduct by his own campaign. The risks of doing so are enormous. 'If President Trump thought the Russian hacking

investigation would just go away, his decision today has insured that it won't,' said presidential historian Timothy Naftali. 'It's going to make getting rid of those allegations so much harder. There's now a cloud of doubt.'" <http://politi.co/2qq30vj>

--"Is This a Constitutional Crisis? Legal experts size up the Comey firing" - Politico Magazine: <http://politi.co/2q2n0mO>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "U.S. Census director resigns amid turmoil over funding of 2020 count," by WaPo's Tara Bahrapour: "The director of the U.S. Census Bureau is resigning, leaving the agency leaderless at a time when it faces a crisis over funding for the 2020 decennial count of the U.S. population and beyond. John H. Thompson, who has served as director since 2013 and worked for the bureau for 27 years before that, will leave June 30, the Commerce Department announced Tuesday. The news, which surprised census experts, follows an April congressional budget allocation for the census that critics say is woefully inadequate." <http://wapo.st/2r0N7bT>

AMERICA'S SUBURBS ARE KILLING US: As the car became essential to American life, our sedentary lifestyles started making obesity and other diseases far worse. Can we reverse-engineer our own towns to fix the problem? The latest issue of **Agenda 2020**, POLITICO's running project on America's long-term policy future looks at new ideas for redesigning how we live. <http://politi.co/2qYHV7B>

BUSINESS BURST -- JPMorgan Chase is announcing Wednesday that its investment in Detroit's economic rebirth will reach \$150 million by 2019. Its focus is building sustainable neighborhoods, making sure Detroit residents have proper job skills and giving small businesses capital. <http://bit.ly/2r0rCaR> ... **Detroit Free Press story** <http://on.freep.com/2q2v8U8>

***** **A message from PhRMA: You don't always pay full price for doctor or hospital visits. So why is a visit to the pharmacy different?** Robust negotiations between biopharmaceutical companies and insurers often result in significant rebates and discounts. In fact, more than a third of the list price for brand medicines is rebated back to payers and the supply chain. Yet, unlike care received at an in-network hospital or physician's office, patients with high deductibles or coinsurance pay cost sharing based on the list price of a medicine, even if their insurer receives a steep discount. Insurers should share more of the rebates they receive with patients. Learn more at <http://onphr.ma/2pdaE7m>. *****

MEDIAWATCH - MICHAEL WOLFF in The Hollywood Reporter, "Fox News Now Faces Sinclair and (Gasp!) Real Competition": "Trump friend and Newsmax CEO Chris Ruddy, long looking for a way to expand his conservative magazine-digital-television play, has been urged, reportedly from inside the White House, to try to finance a deal that would bring O'Reilly to Newsmax. The Mercers, father Bob and daughter Rebekah, leading financial supporters of Trump, Breitbart News and Steve Bannon, the Trump alt-right-leaning strategist, are among the potential willing funders of a major new right-wing media platform." <http://bit.ly/2q1uFS1>

--"**Wall Street Journal adds 300,000 subscribers in last year**," by CNN's Dylan Byers: In "presentations to staff this week, Carla Zanoni, an executive editor for audience development at the Journal, provided insights into the Journal's subscriber base, which is overwhelmingly wealthy older men: 79% of Journal subscribers are male, 88% are above the age of 50 and 70% make over \$100,000 a year, according to her presentation. More than nine of every ten Journal readers (92%) have a college education." <http://cnnmon.ie/2pvaEzC>

Playbookers

OUT AND ABOUT -- Last night K Street Capital held its Spring Social at Social Tables celebrating their portfolio companies, including Dolcetta Gelato, Misfit Juicery, and Republic Restoratives. **SPOTTED:** Tony Fratto, Sarah Feinberg, Josh Mandel, Jay Newton-Small, Penny Lee, Tom Ziemba, Brent Heberlee, Matt McDonald, Roy Schwartz, Beth Lester Sidhu, Kenny Day, Anu Rangappa, Rich Leggett, Evan Burfield, Christina Sevilla, Steve Rochlin, Julian Ha and Margie Sullivan.

-- **PETER BAKER and SUSAN GLASSER** threw a party at their house Tuesday evening to celebrate "The Gatekeepers: How the White House Chiefs of Staff Define Every Presidency," by Chris Whipple - (**\$18 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2q4Q6jt>).

SPOTTED: Whipple's wife Cary and son Sam, John Podesta, Josh Bolten, Ken Duberstein, Wayne Berman, Cofer Black, Lorraine and Chris Wallace, Bob Schieffer, Glenn Thrush, Jonathan Martin and Betsy Fischer Martin, Elizabeth Drew, Juleanna Glover and Christopher Reiter, Margaret Tutwiler, Janet Mullins Grissom, Debra Dunn, Laura Handman, Jane Mayer, Dan Yergin and Angela Stent, Heidi and Doug Rediker, Steve Clemons, John Bellinger.

SPOTTED at Google's Washington office last night for a private screening of HBO's documentary film "Cries of Syria" to discuss the refugee crisis, Syrian civil war, and the role of tech to advance human rights (**promo video:** <http://bit.ly/2pvotxN>): Malika Saada Saar, Evgeny Afineevsky, Anna Therese Day, Marcia Dyson, Kisha Bird, Vince Stehle, Ken Biberaj, Thomas Bowen, Ryan Jones, Jen Nedeau, Meredith Fineman, Angelica Annino, Erin Fitzgerald, Jessica Jennings, Jeffrey Zubricki, Joe Walsh, Penny Tilghman.

TRANSITIONS -- **Ted Kwong**, Sen. Pat Toomey's 2016 campaign communications director and a Scott Walker alum, has joined Whole Foods Market as a regional PR director based in New York. ... **Sue Biniaz** has been named a senior fellow at the United Nations Foundation. She has spent 25 years as the top climate lawyer for the State Department. <http://politi.co/2piEeNH>

HILLARY ALUMNI -- Mike Gwin, Clinton campaign and Obama administration alum, who had been the communications director for the N.C. Democratic Party, is now the deputy communications director for American Oversight. ... **Donte Donald** is joining the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City as the director of public affairs. He previously was national spokesperson for Hillary for America.

OBAMA ALUMNI -- Obama WH research director **Alex Platkin** and deputy research director **Kristen Bartoloni** are launching a research and pre-crisis comms consulting firm named Silver Street Strategies. <http://bit.ly/2q2t3rh>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Ishan Bhabha, former Clerk to Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy now at Jenner & Block, and his wife **Maria Elisa**, who used to work for the World Bank, welcome Sebastian Bhabha born Monday at 2:51 am., weighing in at 7 pounds, 6 ounces and 20.5 inches.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS - SEN. TIM KAINE (D-Va.) officiated this past weekend over the wedding of his former staffer **Gena Boyle Berger** and **Jacob Berger**. The couple got married at The Valentine museum in Richmond, Virginia. It's the 14th wedding Kaine has officiated, according to TMZ. <http://bit.ly/2qYHnyx> ... **Sen. Kaine's tweet about the wedding:** <http://bit.ly/2r0qUue>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: pollster **Stan Greenberg**, CEO of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and the pride of New Haven, is 72 -- **how he's celebrating:** "Celebrating with nearly all generations of the family in Washington on the weekend since Rosa [DeLauro, his wife] is home in the district on recess, because my grandson Teo's birthday is May 11th and because of Mother's Day. Our twins, Anna and Kathryn, settled in DC, and so Sunday will be big." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2r0TJa9>

BIRTHDAYS: Bono is 57 ... Rick Santorum is 59 ... Craig Gordon, managing editor at Bloomberg News in Washington ... Mel Sembler, former RNC finance chairman and U.S. Ambassador to Italy under Bush 43 (hat tip: Scott Kamins) ... Politico's Gabe Debenedetti ... Andrew Card, president of Franklin Pierce University, is 7-0 ... Douglas Farrar, senior manager for comms. and public affairs at the Aspen Institute, is 34 ... CNN national security reporter Jeremy Herb ... Chris Tuttle ... Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.) is 57 ... Rep. Mike Kelly (R-Penn.) ... Elise Italiano ... Chris Berman is 62 ... former Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Wisc.) is 66 (h/t Gary Achterberg) ... Hannah Mooney, senior manager for public affairs at PhRMA ... Jim Powderly ... Ilona Viczian ... Brad Bannon ... Michael Turk ... Christine McDonough ... Clarence Tong ...

... **Veronique de Rugy**, senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center ... writer John Meroney ... Maggie Thomas, associate at Wiley Rein ... Pew's Rachel Weisel ... Lucy Jackson, special assistant at Treasury and a Goldman Sachs alum, is 27 ... Abbey Brandon ... writer Adam Janofsky ... Carter Foxgrover ... Mark Keam ... Terry Holt ... small-business crusader Tom Sullivan ... Dave Kluesner ... NY1's Grace Rauh ... Emily Dillard ... Corbin Casteel ... Andrew Binns ... Bryant Avondoglio ... Jocelyn Austin ... Chris Policano ... David Bethel is 7-0 ... Hernan Rozemberg ... Erik Curren ... Sara

Parker ... Gannet Tseggai ... Jonny Powell ... Christopher Berg ... James L. "Jim" Hooley ... Fernanda Montano Klatzkin ... Amy Simon ... Lisa Boyce ... Julia Dunbar ... Howie Choder ... Jackson Salovaara, celebrating by spending his day saving the environment (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Olympic gold medal swimmer Missy Franklin is 22 (h/t AP)

***** **A message from PhRMA: Insurers should share more of the rebates they receive with patients.** More than a third of the list price for brand medicines is rebated back to payers and the supply chain. Yet, unlike care received at an in-network hospital or physician's office, patients with high deductibles or coinsurance pay cost sharing based on the list price of a medicine, even if their insurer receives a steep discount. Patients share the costs of medicines, so they should share the savings. Learn more about where the discounts are going at <http://onphr.ma/2pdaE7m>. *****

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Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

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To: Alexander Nazaryan[alexnazaryan@gmail.com]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 10/11/2017 8:21:52 PM
Subject: RE: Here is our statement for Newsweek

No, this response is to your query.

From: Alexander Nazaryan [mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 4:19 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

I don't think this response is to my query. I was specifically asking about administrator's visits --- or lack thereof -- to EPA regional offices.

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 12:46 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the

Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,' said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency's senior adviser for climate adaptation. 'Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.' ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities "invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example. 'We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,' Scheraga said. 'They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [<mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com>] **On Behalf Of**
Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

--

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Senior Writer

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(718) 612-3356

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Tue 6/13/2017 9:45:17 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

By Anthony Adragna | 06/13/2017 05:42 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén, Esther Whieldon and Darius Dixon

NUCLEAR NOMS REACH CRITICAL: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is lining up this morning to hear from Trump's trio of Republican nominees for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The toughest questions for NRC Chairwoman Kristine Svinicki and nominees Annie Caputo and David Wright are likely to be parochial in nature. Nuclear power is a fairly contentious issue in New York and California, so Sens. [Kirsten Gillibrand](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) may press the nominees on home state concerns. Sen. [Ed Markey](#) is also a regular needler of NRC officials. Top EPW Democrat [Tom Carper](#) told ME he met with Caputo and Wright Monday afternoon and said "at first blush, both appear to be well-qualified" for the NRC slots.

Svinicki's term expires June 30 — just under three weeks! — but the White House dragged its feet in sending the three nominations to the Senate and EPW leaders are now trying to make up for lost time: The panel has already scheduled a Thursday morning [vote](#) on Svinicki's renomination and intends to move her ASAP. Meanwhile, Carper has said — and reiterated Monday — that he'd like to eventually [package](#) Caputo and Wright with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

Also, up for a turn in the hot seat is Trump's pick to serve as EPA enforcement chief, Susan Bodine. She'll likely get hammered on the White House's proposed budget cuts, which hit enforcement along with most other areas at a time when many states have scaled back their own policing of environmental crimes. Senators may bring up the Justice Department's new policy blocking so-called "third party settlements" that pay for environmental projects, though she can easily enough deflect that as a matter to raise with DOJ. Bodine is getting a lot more bipartisan support than her soon-to-be-boss; EPA [rounded up](#) compliments Monday from Obama-era officials like John Cruden and Avi Garbow.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman [John Barrasso](#) echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman [Chuck Grassley](#) that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " [nonsense](#)."

If you go: The [hearing](#) starts at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 406.

ALSO FOR YOUR RADAR: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson [appears before](#) the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today at 10 a.m. and then [heads to](#) a Senate Appropriations

subpanel at 2:30 p.m. to testify on the State Department's budget request. ME isn't a betting man, but expects the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement will come up along with other international climate diplomacy questions. Tillerson, of course, favored remaining a part of the Paris pact and was notably absent from Trump's Rose Garden speech announcing the pull out.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Kansas is the state that has gone longest without a Democratic senator (none since the 1930s). For today let's flip it around: Which state has gone longest without a Republican senator? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

HONEY I SHRUNK BEARS EARS? Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended Monday trimming back the controversial Bears Ears National Monument, Pro's Esther Whieldon reports. But Zinke did appear to rule out fully doing away with it. "Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call. Zinke also suggested that Congress pass legislation to treat some of the land as national conservation or recreation areas and give tribes the ability to co-manage whatever remains of the monument. Any effort to reshape the boundaries of the monument are sure to face challenges from environmental advocates and tribal groups. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House on more than two dozen prior monument designations under the Antiquities Act.

Many groups quickly slammed the decision: Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation. "No president of the modern era has ever attempted to significantly alter the boundaries of a national monument, and we believe executive branch actions to reverse or otherwise undermine a single monument would jeopardize the future of all monuments," Joel Webster, director of Western lands for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, said in a statement. And Defenders of Wildlife's Jamie Rappaport Clark urged Zinke to "consider the full record" and warned "an attack on one monument is an attack on them all."

But Utah politicians raved: House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop backed the recommendations even though he pushed to fully rescind the monument. "I commend Secretary Zinke for actually listening to local voices on the issue and conducting a thoughtful and deliberative review to help inform the president's ultimate decision," he said in a statement. Gov. Gary Herbert called the interim report an "important first step toward re-establishing sound land management practices" in the area and urged Trump to "take this recommendation seriously." Esther has more on the reaction here.

VA BENE? A subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni is seeking permission to drill from an already existing facility in Alaska state waters in the Beaufort Sea, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports. BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. Eni has proposed to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

REIMAGINING FEDERALISM FOR 2017: State environmental regulators are rethinking how they can best deal with EPA to respond to national and global threats while responding to local concerns and keeping regulatory costs manageable. The Environmental Council of the States released an outline of its Cooperative Federalism 2.0 approach between EPA — which "should continue to lead in setting and adopting national minimum standards to protect public health and the environment" — and the states who are responsible for much of the implementation of federal environmental laws. "State flexibility to determine the best way for its programs to achieve national minimum standards ... is a particularly important aspect of ensuring that environmental protection and economic prosperity go hand-in-hand with healthy and vibrant communities," ECOS writes.

While ECOS did not cite specific examples, it said states "should generally have the ability to set standards that are more stringent or that are broader in scope than federal standards." (The Trump administration is mulling whether to let California keep its Clean Air Act waiver for tough vehicle emissions rules.)

SHAKING THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ON CHINA: The Council on Foreign Relations' Elizabeth Economy argues in POLITICO Magazine that China has undeservedly seized the mantle of a world climate change leader — at least so far. "Filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today," Economy writes. She argues true global leadership requires nations subordinate their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community and President Xi Jinping has not shown this will happen on climate change for China.

RED ALERT: Government officials and energy sector leaders were scrambling Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that could map grid networks, sabotage safety equipment and paralyze power companies, Pro Cybersecurity's Eric Geller reports. The weapon, which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors, can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. It's worth noting the industry has plotted for such scenarios for years, the government has improved its ability to respond quickly to potential threats and there's no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks to date.

HOUSE PASSES BUNCH O'ENERGY BILLS: Lawmakers approved 10 energy infrastructure and energy efficiency measures in the House on Monday night. Among the highlights: The HYPE Act (H.R. 2274), which would allow FERC flexibility to extend deadlines on hydropower project permitting; H.R. 627, which helps schools learn about federal funding for energy efficiency projects; H.R. 338, which hopes to expand education and training opportunities for energy and manufacturing-related jobs; and H.R. 1109, which would amend the Federal Power Act to set \$10 million as the minimum threshold for mergers and acquisitions subject to FERC jurisdiction. All of those passed by voice vote.

ZINKE KICKS OFF NEW ENGLAND SWING: Zinke kicks off a four-day trip through New England today where he'll tour several national monuments and scope out additional agency lands and holdings. First up: Zinke speaks to the National Congress of American Indians at

Mohegan Sun in Connecticut and then drives over to New Hampshire to announce a major conservation grant.

GREEN GROUPS PUSH PERRIELLO IN VIRGINIA PRIMARY: 350 Action supporters from all 50 states made calls Monday urging voters to back former Rep. Tom Perriello over Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam in today's Virginia Democratic gubernatorial primary. Climate Hawks Vote, Bill McKibben and Friends of the Earth are among the environmental endorsements Perriello has racked up in the primary campaign. Former Republican National Committee chair Ed Gillespie is a heavy favorite in the Republican primary. Polls close at 7 p.m.

FORMER EPA EMPLOYEES HIT PROPOSED TRUMP CUTS: Ahead of Pruitt's Thursday testimony on his agency's budget request, the Environmental Protection Network released [an analysis](#) finding the administration's push to slash EPA's budget by nearly one-third would "severely affect almost every aspect of EPA's programs and operations" and hit younger employees especially hard. "Staff layoffs most likely will hit younger, more recently hired staff, decimating the next generation of environmental professionals and crippling EPA and state efforts for years to come," the report from the bipartisan group of former agency employees concludes.

Speaking of which, Rep. [Dan Kildee](#) holds a press conference at 11 a.m. this morning Sierra Club and the American Federation of Government Employees in opposition to proposed budget cuts to the Great Lakes region and agency more broadly.

A \$3.4 BILLION (REQUIRED) SALE: General Electric must sell its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants DOJ's sign off on a merger with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). GE announced plans to do precisely that in a deal \$3.4 billion deal with Suez, a French water and energy company. The Trump administration filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department.

MAIL CALL! HANDS OFF OUR MONUMENTS: Hot on the heels of Zinke's Bears Ears interim report, California Democratic Sens. [Dianne Feinstein](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) released a [letter](#) urging Interior not to alter the boundaries of six existing national monument in their state. "We respectfully request that your Department not recommend to the President that California's national monuments be rolled back or otherwise reduced," they wrote.

GET THOSE E15 PITCHES IN: More than two dozen advanced biofuel producers and trade associations, led by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization and Advanced Biofuels Business Council, sent Barrasso and Carper a [letter](#) Monday urging support for the [Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act](#) (S. 517). That measure, which would allow year-round sales of the E15, is slated for a [hearing](#) in EPW on Wednesday.

ARPA-E GETS A HEALTH CHECK: The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases a report at 11 a.m. today looking at how good DOE's ARPA-E program, which aims to support radical new energy technologies, has been over its first six years. ME readers likely remember the Trump administration has called for zeroing out the program's

funding.

REPORT: MINIMAL OVERLAP BETWEEN SAGE GROUSE, ENERGY

DEVELOPMENT: Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is releasing a [new report](#) today finding 79 percent of areas with medium to high potential for energy development fall outside of the greater sage grouse's habitat. It comes as Interior [launched](#) a review of the sage grouse conservation plans already in place.

NEW CAMPAIGN PUSHES NATURAL GAS: The American Gas Association launched a new national campaign — entitled "Your Energy" — educating consumers about what it says are the positive benefits of natural gas and the role it plays in their lives. State-specific programming kicks off in Connecticut and Virginia first. New website [here](#) (with autoplay!).

AWARDS SEASON: The Edison Electric Institute's Board of Directors gave retiring Executive Vice President David Owens the Thomas A. Edison Legacy Award, while the Institute for Electric Innovation awarded Pepco Holdings' Karen Lefkowitz with its Technology Leadership Award.

MOVER, SHAKER: Steptoe & Johnson has added Monique Watson as of counsel, working in the energy group. She previously spent 15 years at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, where she focused on oil and natural gas pipeline issues (h/t POLITICO Influence).

QUICK HITS

— Big Oil could shift a fifth of spending to renewables by 2035, Wood Mac says. [Houston Chronicle](#).

— Democrats aim to block Atlantic energy surveys. [API](#).

— TransCanada asks for pause on review of ND oil pipeline. [Bismarck Tribune](#).

— Dakota Access Pipeline reprimanded by Iowa regulators for lack of liability insurance. [Des Moines Register](#).

— BP Violated Contract When It Blended Texas Crude-Monroe Energy. [Reuters](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

9:00 a.m. — "[The Methanol Policy Forum](#)," National Press Club, 529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor

10:00 a.m. — Senate committee [hearing](#) on NRC and EPA nominations, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — "[Small Watershed Infrastructure: Continuing the Mission, Building upon Success](#)," House Agriculture Committee's Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee, 1300 Longworth

11:00 a.m. — American Petroleum Institute holds briefing on E15 and the Renewable Fuel Standard, RSVP: fangs@api.org

11:00 a.m. — Rep. Dan Kildee holds press conference call with Sierra Club and AFGE on proposed EPA budget cuts, RSVP: mitchell.rivard@mail.house.gov

11:00 a.m. — The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases report on ARPA-E program, National Academies' Keck Center, 500 Fifth St. NW, Room 100

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/nrc-epa-nominees-get-their-date-in-committee-today-023270>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Carper has asked Barrasso to reconfirm Svinicki solo [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/08/2017 03:31 PM EDT

A Senate Democrat said today that he's asked Republicans to split up the confirmations of Nuclear Regulatory Commission nominees in order to fast track the reappointment of Kristine Svinicki.

Sen. [Tom Carper](#), the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, told reporters that he supports Svinicki's renomination and pitched to EPW Chairman [John Barrasso](#) that she get confirmed while the panel reviews the other two Republican nominees.

"She's been through several times, so it shouldn't be too heavy a lift," the Delaware Democrat said.

Carper said the other nominees, Annie Caputo and David Wright, could be packaged with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

"One of the things I've suggested to Chairman Barrasso is to find a way to pair those two maybe with one Democrat, and there's a Democrat on the NRC whose term expires ... next year," Carper said. "The idea of going ahead and moving his renomination along with a couple of Republicans would be of interest to me."

Repackaging the two new GOP nominees with Baran would mean "we wouldn't have to do them, like, next week," Carper said.

Svinicki, who has been an NRC commissioner for nine years, was elevated to the agency's chairmanship by Trump in January. But she's facing a time crunch and would have to step down,

even temporarily, if the Senate fails to confirm her for another five-year term by June 30.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has scheduled a nomination hearing to review all three GOP NRC nominees on June 13.

To view online [click here](#).

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Grassley rips Trump administration for blowing off certain oversight requests [Back](#)

By Burgess Everett | 06/09/2017 11:25 AM EDT

The Trump administration's policy of ignoring the oversight requests of Democrats and rank-and-file members has earned it a powerful enemy: Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley.

In a [letter](#) to President Donald Trump, the veteran Iowa Republican senator urged Trump to reverse a policy instituted by the White House and the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel to answer oversight requests only from committee chairmen, all of whom are Republicans because of GOP control of Congress. Though Grassley said that the Obama administration did sometimes ignore him, he said the formalization of a policy of ignoring the minority party "doesn't drain the swamp, Mr. President. It floods the swamp."

"I respectfully request that the White House rescind this OLC opinion and any policy of ignoring oversight request from non-Chairmen. It harms not just the members who happen to be in the minority party at the moment, but also, members in the majority party who are not currently chairmen. It obstructs what ought to be the natural flow of information between agencies and the committees, which frustrates the constitutional function of legislating," Grassley wrote.

He was not near done. In the seven-page letter to the president, Grassley calls the administration's opinion "nonsense" and argues that the president is being "ill-served and ill-advised" by his staff.

"To so fundamentally misunderstand and misstate such a simple fact exposes its shocking lack of professionalism and objectivity. Indeed, OLC appears to have utterly failed to live up to its own standards," Grassley added.

The Justice Department declined to comment to Grassley's letter. The White House did not immediately respond.

Fearing the weaponization of oversight requests by Democrats amid a deepening investigation into the administration's ties to Russia, White House officials [instructed](#) government agencies not to respond to oversight requests from anyone other than chairmen last month. Also in May, OLC wrote a guidance [memo](#) that formally restricted the flow of information to Democrats.

"Individual members of Congress, including ranking minority members, do not have the authority to conduct oversight in the absence of a specific delegation by a full house, committee, or subcommittee," OLC wrote in the memo.

There have been some exceptions to this policy on subjects like national security and at the Treasury Department, according to Democratic and Republican Hill staffers. But Democrats released dozens of letters on Thursday that they said have gone substantively unanswered by the Trump administration.

Democrats are outraged at the moves by the Trump White House to squash their requests, which range from overtly partisan letters asking for information that would likely damage the president to parochial issues that will never grab headlines. And now, some Republicans are, too.

"Members of Congress simply do not treat executive branch officials with such contempt and they do not deserve such treatment in return," Grassley wrote. "Unlike virtually all executive branch officials, Members are elected to constitutional positions. Instead, the executive branch should work to cooperate in good faith with all congressional requests to the fullest extent possible."

To view online [click here](#).

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Zinke recommends shrinking Bears Ears monument [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 04:07 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke proposed shrinking the Bears Ears National Monument on Monday, trimming back the controversial Utah monument created by former President Barack Obama during his final days in office.

A preliminary review of the 1.4 million-acre monument that Zinke sent to the White House over the weekend shows his "belief that the monument needs to be right-sized," Zinke said in a statement.

Any move by President Donald Trump to alter the monument designed to protect thousands of sensitive archaeological sites will set off a legal fight with tribes and conservation groups that have complained the Native American ruins there were being damaged and would be threatened by oil and gas development in the area.

Zinke's preliminary recommendations to Trump show he did not plan to go as far as revoking Obama's monument designation — a move that has been sought by the state's congressional delegation.

"Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call.

Trump has ordered Zinke to review 22 of the national monuments that were established in the past two decades to determine if they should be altered or revoked. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House, and Zinke has extended the comment period on Bears Ears to July 10.

Zinke is also pressing Congress to look at the Bears Ears boundaries "to see whether the lands are more appropriately designated as national conservation areas or national recreation areas," he said. "There's certainly a high demand of recreation. There's certainly a demand for conservation in some parts, but we believe that those areas are better suited under congressionally mandated designations than they are a monument."

The secretary also asked Congress to grant tribes the ability to co-manage specific areas within Bears Ears, and for Congress to clarify how wilderness areas that overlap with monuments should be treated, an issue for Bears Ears and some other monuments under review.

A former congressman from Montana, Zinke cited his concern that the federal government restricts activities on the land it designates as protected, saying that designating a monument the size of Bears Ears where "multiple-use management is hindered or prohibited is not the best use of the land and is not in accordance with the intention of the Antiquities Act."

President Barack Obama created the monument in southeast Utah in December, angering Republicans who accused the administration of federal overreach by ignoring locals who opposed the move and using the Antiquities Act to cut off commercial activity such as mining and oil and gas drilling.

Prior legislative attempts by the Utah delegation to curb federal monuments in the state have failed. Utah Republicans Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz did manage last year to get their Utah Public Lands Initiative legislation through the Natural Resources Committee, which Bishop chairs, but it never received a floor vote.

If Trump ultimately decides to alter Bears Ears or the other monuments on the list, he is certain to face legal challenges from environmental groups. "An attack on one monument is an attack on all of them," said Jesse Prentice-Dunn, advocacy director at the Center for Western Priorities.

Past presidents have changed the size of monuments but none have revoked them entirely, and legal questions remain as to whether the law allows a president to fully undo their predecessor's actions.

Zinke last month traveled to the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments and this week he will head to New England to visit the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine, which is also under review.

Zinke has repeatedly talked about the need to balance conservation with commercial and

recreational demands on public lands, and has already this year ended the moratorium on new coal leases and launched reviews on ways to open up more areas for oil and gas development.

To view online [click here](#).

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Greens pan Zinke's Bears Ears plan, Utah lawmakers offer praise [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 05:02 PM EDT

Environmental and recreation groups slammed Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's recommendation that President Donald Trump should shrink the Bears Ears National Monument, warning they would fight the move in court.

Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation, and NRDC President Rhea Suh said Zinke's proposal "sends a chilling signal about the Trump administration's intent to hand over irreplaceable American landscapes to mining and fossil fuel interests."

Zinke's preliminary report [recommended](#) Trump downsize the 1.4 million-acre Bears Ears monument and suggested Congress pass legislation that designates some portions as national recreation areas or national conservation areas.

But the Outdoor Industry Association noted that previous attempts to pass legislation on monuments in the last congress had fizzled. "We are worried that the legislative process would fail again, leaving these important areas unprotected," said Amy Roberts, OIA executive director.

Utah's Congressional delegation praised Zinke's call to reduce the size of the monument, even though the lawmakers had pushed to revoke the monument. Many of Zinke's recommendations are similar to a bill the delegation backed in the last Congress.

Sen. [Orrin Hatch](#) (R-Utah) in a tweeted [video](#) said Zinke's recommendation "reflects a balance of our shared priorities in protecting this land and the antiquities that are found on it, while still preserving local involvement and taking into consideration the needs of local communities." And Rep. [Rob Bishop](#) (R-Utah) said Zinke's report "recognizes that local input should matter."

WHAT'S NEXT: Zinke has until Aug. 24 to make his final report on all 22 monuments he is reviewing and the agency is accepting public comments on all of them through July 10.

To view online [click here](#).

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Eni submits plan to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/12/2017 05:54 PM EDT

BOEM is asking the public to weigh in on whether it should allow a subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea.

Eni's move coincides with the Trump administration's push to open up more federal waters for oil and gas development. The Interior Department is currently reviewing how much of federal offshore holdings should be open to drilling.

Eni would drill into federal waters from its already existing facility in Alaska state waters, according to the [plan](#) it submitted to BOEM. The company proposes to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

WHAT'S NEXT: BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. The agency will take 30 days to evaluate Eni's plan.

To view online [click here](#).

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Why China Is No Climate Leader [Back](#)

By Elizabeth Economy | 06/12/2017 04:57 PM EDT

When President Donald Trump yanked America's support for the Paris Climate Accords, pundits were quick to hail China as the world's new environmental leader. Two veteran journalists [wrote](#) that the decision was "the greatest strategic gift to the Chinese, who are eager to fill the void that Washington is leaving around the world."

But is leadership on climate change really a strategic gift? Do the Chinese want it? And above all, do they merit it? The quick answer is no, no and no.

True global leadership is costly: It requires vision, creativity, perseverance, deft diplomacy and often cold, hard cash. It also demands a willingness on the part of political leaders to align, and in some cases subordinate, their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community. The Chinese, including President Xi Jinping, understand this. That is why any number of Chinese analysts have been quick to reject the idea that Chinese leadership on climate change is realistic, [arguing](#) as one did, "Taking on global leadership is too much, too soon for China." Xi Jinping, himself, is somewhat less willing to reject the idea out of hand. China as a global power shaping norms and institutions is a central element of his rejuvenation narrative. He therefore flirts with the prospect, proclaiming China ready to [defend](#) globalization and to [protect](#)

the Paris climate agreement. But nowhere does Xi say that China will actually lead; that is left to others.

So where does China stand on the climate leadership spectrum? First, the good. It will meet its Paris commitment: By 2030, China's CO2 emissions will peak and its energy intensity (the amount of energy consumed per unit of GDP) will be reduced by 60-65 percent. In addition, Beijing is making strides toward rebalancing its energy mix. This year it cancelled 85 new coal-fired power plants on top of the 18 that it cancelled last year; if brought on line, these 103 new plants would have exceeded China's 2020 targets of 1100GW of coal-fired power capacity by 150 GW. (By way of comparison, total U.S. energy produced from coal is 350GW.) Moreover, China has pledged not to approve new coal-fired power plants in as many as 13 provinces and regions until 2018. (Of course, one might reasonably ask what is happening in the other 18 provinces and regions, and what 2018 might bring.) China has also stepped up its commitment to renewable energy. In 2016 China invested \$78.3 billion in renewable energy—topping both Europe (\$59.8 billion) and the United States (\$46.4 billion). China also ranks first in terms of total installed renewable electric capacity. Much of this capacity, however, remains idle. In 2016, in three of the most wind power-rich provinces and regions—Gansu, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia—for example, levels of curtailment (capacity not utilized) reached 43 percent, 38 percent and 21 percent respectively. The curtailment rate for solar energy was similarly high. In contrast, curtailment rates in the United States and Europe are generally between 0-5 percent. In the wait and see category, China is reportedly set to launch a nationwide CO2 cap and trade system sometime this year. This system could be spectacular, or it could be spectacularly embarrassing.

Now the bad. China is still the largest emitter of CO2 on the planet by a substantial margin, contributing 29 percent of the world's total CO2 emissions in 2015. The United States comes in a distant second at 14 percent. In addition, while Beijing is cutting back on coal-fired power plants—particularly in its wealthy and pollution-conscious coastal provinces—it is upping its count of CO2 emitting coal-to-chemical (including coal-to-gas) plants. There are 46 coal-to-chemical plants in operation and another 22 under construction that will add another 193 million tons of carbon emissions annually. A conservative estimate suggests that by 2020, such plants will contribute as much CO2 as all of Poland's contribution to global carbon emissions, while the extreme scenario—if China builds all the coal-to-chemical plants outlined in its 13th Five Year Plan—will lead to a contribution of almost 800 million tons per year, more than German's total carbon emissions in 2015, and equal to roughly 10 percent of China's current CO2 contribution.

China also falls short in the eyes of some independent monitoring groups that assess countries' climate commitments. The 2017 annual report by German Watch and the Climate Action Network ranks China 48th—just a few places behind the United States at 43rd—in terms of how much it has done to avoid climate change and how much it plans to do. True climate leadership belongs to the Europeans—France, Sweden and the United Kingdom, in particular—although even these climate leaders come in for some criticism. Moreover, the Climate Action Tracker, produced by three international research institutions, indicates that China's current emission reduction targets are not consistent with ensuring that the earth's warming remains below 2 degrees C.

And finally the ugly. Whatever positive steps China is taking at home are not being replicated in its behavior abroad. China is the world's largest exporter of coal-fired power plant finance and technology. Even as Xi is calling for an "international coalition for green development on the Belt and Road" (his comprehensive new trade and development initiative involving 65 countries), Beijing is backing more than 100 new coal-fired power projects in the Belt and Road countries. China's much-touted Belt and Road deals in Pakistan, for example, include plans for as many as 12 coal-fired power plants—even in areas recognized for their superior solar energy potential. In addition, China is actively pushing coal-to-chemical plants abroad. The Paris accords don't account for countries' actions outside their own borders, so China is not breaking the letter of its Paris commitments, but these Belt and Road investments are certainly not in keeping with the spirit of the agreement.

Beyond the clear limitations of China's climate policies at home and abroad, there remains the larger question of diplomatic leadership. Will China rally other countries to adopt another round of more ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets? Will it stop the overseas financing and sale of coal-fired power plants and coal-to-chemical plants? Will it push forward to limit other harmful greenhouse gas emissions, such as methane? Will it accede to international monitoring and verification of its emissions, an important measure it continues to reject? Thus far, there is no indication that China has plans to adopt any of these leadership-worthy measures.

When Trump, in the midst of withdrawing the United States from the Paris agreement, offered up the possibility of renegotiating the climate pact, the rest of the world in effect said, "not going to happen." Undoubtedly other countries are becoming accustomed to the idea of a world without American leadership. But filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today.

To view online [click here](#).

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Electric sector, feds rush to thwart 'milestone' cyber weapon [Back](#)

By Eric Geller | 06/12/2017 04:09 PM EDT

Government officials and energy sector leaders scrambled Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that researchers are calling a "milestone" for hackers hoping to cripple power grids.

But while all involved concede that the weapon — which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors — has the power to unleash never-before-seen cyberattacks, security experts and industry representatives cautioned that the U.S. power grid is better suited than many others to fend off such a digital assault.

The energy sector has spent years wargaming such scenarios, and it has systems in place to

replace damaged equipment, share resources and swap information in the wake of a massive power outage. The government has also improved its rapid-response capabilities in recent years for just such instances. And as of yet, industry representatives noted, there is no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks.

"Our grid benefits from significant experience with weather and other challenges and is very robust," said John Hultquist, director of cyber espionage analysis at iSIGHT, a division of the security firm FireEye.

The new digital weapon leapt into the public eye Monday morning via reports from security firms Dragos and ESET. Researchers described it as a highly customized toolkit for mapping grid networks, sabotaging safety equipment and paralyzing power companies. The malware — which Dragos calls CrashOverride and ESET calls Industroyer — can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. ESET claimed that it can also disable equipment designed to prevent grid overloads, potentially letting hackers cause widespread physical damage.

"This is a milestone for critical infrastructure in the West where it's been anxiously anticipated for quite some time," said Hultquist.

Experts believe Russian hackers tested the malware's new powers in a little-noticed cyberattack on the Ukrainian power grid last December, an incident that was largely overlooked amid concerns about Moscow's alleged meddling in the U.S. presidential race. The attack — which mirrored a first-of-its-kind 2015 digital strike on Ukraine's power grid — briefly turned off one-fifth of the electric power generated in Kiev, Ukraine's capital.

"This capability now appears to be in the hands of a government who has violated every norm in this space with increasingly aggressive behavior," Hultquist said. "I doubt Ukraine is the last place we will see this capability deployed."

The electric sector jumped into action shortly before the reports dropped. Researchers briefed the industry's cyber information sharing center on Sunday morning, and the group began distributing technical data about the malware that afternoon. An industry coordinating group known as the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council is also in contact with the Department of Energy, according to Scott Aaronson, the group's secretary.

Elsewhere, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation — the electricity industry's main nonprofit regulatory body — is preparing a public alert on the new malware and will release it "as soon as possible," according to spokeswoman Kimberly Mielcarek.

"There is no question that cyberthreats like the one in Ukraine are real and that constant vigilance is needed to protect the reliability of the North American grid," Mielcarek said.

Industry forces are also working with DHS, which has a cyber command center constantly monitoring hacking threats. NERC has a representative at the that center — known as the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center — who helps coordinate

between DHS and the electric sector.

A DHS spokesman said the department was aware of the malware and was "working with the researchers and industry on this issue," but declined to discuss specifics.

For years, the public and private sectors have operated joint exercises to try and prepare for the types of bruising attacks that CrashOverride may unleash. Electric companies and government agencies gather every two years for drills that simulate digital and physical disruptions at power facilities and encourage collaboration to resolve the problems.

The most recent exercise, in 2015, brought together top executives from energy firms and senior officials from DHS, the Pentagon, the FBI, the Department of Energy, the White House and other federal agencies.

The exercise "highlighted the importance of well-coordinated communications," according to a [summary report](#). But participants complained that the information sharing center's portal "needed enhancements to handle real-time, urgent communication," the report said. "During the exercise, information was quickly buried within the portal and it became difficult to highlight important information."

A major priority for electric companies is being able to continue operations despite network disruptions — what Aaronson called operating "in a degraded state."

"What we have learned from any number of these incidents [is] that you cannot protect everything from everything," Aaronson said. "We have to focus on restoration, response and recovery in order to ensure that we can continue to provide the product that is critical to the life, health and safety of Americans."

The electric sector also prides itself on what Aaronson called "cyber mutual assistance," in which unaffected companies send technicians to assist the digitally-targeted operators.

In general, security experts said, the American power system is less vulnerable to a large-scale digital disruption than systems in other countries.

But those same experts, as well as federal officials and even industry representatives, acknowledge that the threat is still grave and that more work needs to be done. And preparations for thwarting CrashOverride's potentially damaging, information-wiping, recovery-system-immobilizing attacks are based on the scant few examples of what such an incapacitating cyberattack might look like.

The CrashOverride toolkit is only the second known example of malware designed to disrupt a power facility. The United States and Israel are believed to have deployed the first such virus, codenamed Stuxnet, in the mid-2000s to sabotage Iranian nuclear centrifuges. But despite its formidable design and potentially devastating consequences, experts said the industry would handle it through normal channels.

CrashOverride is "another example of malware that has the potential to have an impact on grid operations," said Aaronson. "But notice the word that I used there: it is another one. And there will be another one tomorrow, and another one after that."

John Chirhart, federal technical director at the security firm Tenable, said it was important to note that the malware did not use any zero-day vulnerabilities, pieces of code that exploit undiscovered flaws.

"With all of the buzz around Industroyer being 'the next Stuxnet,' you'd think it was one of the most sophisticated threats out there," he said, "but with no zero days in the Industroyer payload, the significance of this malware as a stand-alone event is small."

Aaronson cited the flurry of chatter that started Sunday as evidence that the proper response mechanisms were in place.

"I think we are well positioned to deal with this particular threat and all of the ones that are yet to come," he said.

Tim Starks contributed to this report.

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DOJ will require GE to sell refinery chemicals business before Baker Hughes merger [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/12/2017 03:52 PM EDT

The Justice Department today said it will require General Electric to sell off its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants the government's blessing to merge with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes.

GE in March announced [plans to sell that division](#) to Suez, a French water and energy company, for \$3.4 billion. Carrying out that sale will satisfy the DOJ.

GE and Baker Hughes together represent two of the four major providers of refinery chemicals and services, which are classified as "process technologies." Allowing GE and Baker Hughes to combine their refinery chemicals division would hurt competitiveness and drive up prices, the DOJ argued.

The DOJ filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department. The proposal is subject to 60 days of public comment and court approval.

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Zinke orders review of sage grouse plans [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/07/2017 07:17 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed a secretarial order on Wednesday launching an internal review of the agency's sage grouse conservation plans across 11 Western states that aims to foster increased energy development.

The order, which will be released Thursday morning, directs the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey to identify parts in BLM's 98 land use management plans that should be tweaked or rescinded because of their effect on development or due to differences with each state's own plans.

The review will focus on principal threats to the sage grouse habitat, such as invasive grasses and wildland fire, and will consider options like captive breeding and setting population targets — something the governors of Wyoming and Colorado [warned](#) may not be the right approach. Zinke directed the team to report back within 60 days.

Some governors have complained that the current management plans set under the Obama administration hinder their ability to develop oil and gas resources and create hurdles for timber harvesting and recreation, Zinke said in a press call.

But former Interior Secretary Sally Jewell told POLITICO on Wednesday the existing management plans were "designed to be very flexible and to allow the states and the federal land management agencies to work together" to support both sage grouse conservation and energy development.

However, she acknowledged the agency's 2015 decision not to list the sage grouse as endangered or threatened was not fully hashed out. "When you do something on this scope and scale, you haven't refined all the details yet," Jewell said. What matters is that "everybody understands that they need to protect critical habitat if that decision to not list the bird is going to stick."

The Western Energy Alliance, an oil and gas industry group, has challenged some of the existing plans in court and says the agency ignored the technological advances that reduce the impact of fossil fuel extraction on the sage grouse habitat, which spans all of the major producing basins in Wyoming, Utah, Montana and parts of Colorado.

Alliance President Kathleen Sgamma said Interior should defer more to states since they know where the sage grouse is most active, and she isn't worried that reworking the plans could take years.

"What risk is there?" Sgamma said. "Development is at practically a standstill already in sage

grouse habitat."

Conservation groups contend Zinke's move will prioritize energy development over conservation.

"Zinke seems to believe that the highest and best use of America's public lands is for the development of dirty fossil fuels and so it's unsurprising that he's proposing to take a look at gutting protections for an imperiled species to benefit that industry," said Ted Zukoski, an Earthjustice staff attorney who has represented conservation groups in legal battles over sage grouse plans in Wyoming and Utah.

Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, said Zinke's idea to set population targets for states could actually increase the likelihood the FWS will later list the bird, since the agency would have to revisit the decision if states fail to meet their targets.

"The very thing that some folks and industry are fearing, which is not being able to do anything, would almost definitely occur if they went on the path they're proposing," O'Mara said.

Nada Culver, senior counsel and director of The Wilderness Society's BLM Action Center, said the existing plans do not need to be scrapped but rather the agency can better clarify how fossil fuel and renewable energy projects can be developed in sage grouse habitat. "There's room in the plan to do that," she said.

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From: Daniell, Kelsi
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:46:28 PM
Subject: FW: Time-sensitive request from Bloomberg Government regarding Definers

Making sure you saw this.

From: Skolnik, Samuel [mailto:sskolnik@bgov.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:37 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Time-sensitive request from Bloomberg Government regarding Definers

Hi all. I cover federal contracting and procurement issues for Bloomberg Government, and am working on a daily story based off of reports that EPA today has dropped the contract with Definers Corp. to help the EPA shape press coverage of the agency, through a no-bid contract.

Questions:

1 – Why did EPA drop the Definers contract?

2 – Why was this a sole-source solicitation in the first place?

3 – How did EPA decide to solicit the work from Definers Corp. specifically?

4 – What did EPA need to do to justify this as a sole-source solicitation? Did the agency do what it needed to, to abide the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other pertinent laws? What exactly was that?

5 – Does EPA believe there are inherent risks to agencies, and by extension taxpayers, in no-bid contracts? If so, what are they?

I'm looking for comment (or EPA's written thoughts, attributable to Jahan Wilcox or whoever the right person might be) by 4 p.m. today. My contact info is below.

Thank you,

Sam

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Fri 11/17/2017 9:49:22 PM
Subject: Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders, 11/17/2017, #33

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 17, 2017

PRESS BRIEFING

BY PRESS SECRETARY SARAH SANDERS

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

3:00 P.M. EST

MS. SANDERS: Good afternoon. Yesterday, momentum continued to build behind our plan to deliver massive tax relief and job creation for the American people. The House passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and the Senate Finance Committee passed its companion tax reform bill.

These were important moments as we move closer to a final vote.

In recent months, we've heard from American entrepreneurs, workers, and families from every corner of our nation about how this plan will empower them to build a better life.

In Pennsylvania, Susie Schlomann said that our plan will be “incredible for me and other fixed-income retirees,” because tax relief is targeted at the middle class.

In Ohio, Kristina Port -- a small business owner who raised twins as a single mother while launching her company -- said the increase in the child tax credit would help working mothers. She also said simplifying the complex tax code would ease the burden on entrepreneurs and allow them to devote more of their time to growing their business, rather than wrestling with their taxes.

In state after state, story after story, we've heard how our plan will profoundly improve the lives of hardworking Americans. The optimism is coming back, because with this tax plan -- combined with the President's efforts to eliminate job-killing regulations -- Americans feel like their goals are once again attainable.

It's a reminder of one of the things that made our country unique to begin with. Our people have always been able to visualize a future for themselves and their children and make it a reality. That's why it's called the "American Dream," and this tax plan will make it more attainable for more of our people than ever before.

But for this to happen, we need economic growth that makes it possible for businesses to create jobs and raise wages. So to give some perspective on how our tax plan is going to do that, I've invited Kevin Hassett, the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, to join us in the briefing today. Kevin will say a few words and then take some questions specific to this topic. And, as always, I will come back up to take the rest of your questions after that, which I'm sure will all be on tax reform. (Laughter.)

So, with that, I'll turn it over to Kevin.

MR. HASSETT: Thanks, Sarah. Thanks. And it's a pleasure to be here to see so many familiar faces. You know, last week I had the honor of chairing the Economic Policy Committee meeting at the OECD in Paris. And the Economic Policy Committee is one of the oldest committees in OECD, and it brings together people, like the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, from countries around the OECD.

And, at the meeting, they were going through the staff recommendations of the OECD for creating economic growth in countries around the world. And the three main points of the staff recommendations were tax reform, infrastructure, and deregulation -- that if the government pursues those things, then they can produce more economic growth.

In fact, there was widespread acclaim for the President's approach towards corporate taxation in particular, because the OECD has been calling for us to reform our corporate tax code for almost a decade.

And so the idea right now that this corporate tax reform is close to the finish line is celebrated not only by us at the White House, but by people around the world who have recognized that us having a non-competitive tax code, the highest corporate tax on Earth, a worldwide system that rewards companies for locating activity elsewhere, is bad not only for us but for the world economy -- because a vibrant U.S. economy is good even for our friends in the OECD.

And, with that, I'm pleased to see that the House Ways and Means Committee and then the House have passed this bill, and that it's out of the Finance Committee -- I look forward to the Senate moving forward right after the Thanksgiving break.

And, I guess, I promised -- I'm not good at this. I don't know what the protocol is, but I'll start in the front row and then work back.

Q Perfect. (Laughter.)

MR. HASSETT: Yeah, that's right. I'm just an economist.

Q Kevin, I know you're an economist but there's obviously a political component to all of this. You got at least six senators up on the Hill, including Ron Johnson, saying that they can't support the bill in its current form or they have serious concerns about it. You can only afford to lose two. Are you confident that you can get this passed through the Senate? Or could the President run into another situation, like he did with Obamacare? That he wins the House and then loses everything in the Senate.

MR. HASSETT: Look, there's an old joke about economists, that there are three types: those who can count and those who can't. (Laughter.) And it takes a while for that one to sink in. And the fact is that the President has supported, from the beginning, regular order because he doesn't think that we have to wait until the thing becomes law to learn what's in it; that the right thing to do is to expose the bills to scrutiny and debate.

And Senator Johnson -- I met with him yesterday in his office -- has some serious concerns, and it's appropriate at this point in legislative process to bring those forward. And I'm hopeful that people can work it out and that everybody, even Democrats, will end up wanting to vote for it.

And so I'm not sure about the etiquette for follow-ups, so I'll try to limit people to one because there's a lot of hands.

Q What makes you think trickle-down economics is going to work this time when it hasn't worked before?

MR. HASSETT: So trickle-down economics is something that, I guess, people who criticize the idea that taxes affect the economy will use to characterize approaches like the one that we're pursuing. But I don't think the idea that's celebrated by even the non-partisan staff of the OECD - that if you have lower marginal rates, you get economic growth -- is voodoo economics or controversial at all.

And yeah, the fact is that countries around the world have cut their corporate rates and had broad-based reforms, like we're doing on the individual side, and then seeing economic growth result.

I don't think there's anybody who thinks that you'll get no growth or negative growth for this. Maybe there are a few people. But in every economic model I've seen, you get growth -- either a lot of growth, or sometimes if it's a closed economy model, a little growth. But you get positive growth out of this. And that growth will benefit workers, and let's talk about that.

So, right now, the way a U.S. firm avoids U.S. tax is they locate activity, say, in a country like Ireland instead of here. And so if you build a plant in Ireland, then you can sell the stuff back into the U.S. And when you sell the stuff back into the U.S., then it increase the trade deficit and doesn't do anything for American workers, but it does increase the demand for Irish workers and drive up their wages.

And so what the President wants to do is cut the rate to 20 percent and build guardrails around the tax code so that people can't transfer price -- everything to Ireland anymore. And if we do that, then the people who benefit will be the workers here in the U.S. who have increased demand for their jobs.

Q And the incentive --

MR. HASSETT: I said no follow-ups. So I'm going to back this way and then I'm going to switch sides. I'm sorry I don't know everybody's names here.

Q One of Senator Johnson's concerns is that this bill does not do enough for medium-sized and small businesses. Can you talk about what the bill does do for medium-size and small businesses?

MR. HASSETT: Sure. And the fact is that I want to remind everybody that the President has, really, three main non-negotiables for this bill: that there is a 20 percent corporate tax rate; that there's a big middle-class tax cut; and that the bill simplified the tax code. And we believe, after analyzing the progress on the Hill, that both approaches satisfy the three main objectives.

And so the question then is, moving forward, what do they do about pass-through entities? What do they do about this, what do they do about that? And we at the White House don't want to get ahead of that process.

The President supports regular order because that's really how deals get made and how bills become law. The fact is, it's urgent that we get a 20 percent rate for America's workers. And it's urgent that we get a middle-class tax cut for America's workers. And the details about like exactly when the small business things kick in and out are things that we're watching them work out up on the Hill. And we encourage them to pursue regular order because they need to listen to everybody and get the votes they need to make this law.

I'll go to the lady, right there.

Q One of the major differences between the House and the Senate bill is the elimination of the non-taxable tuition waivers. So while they're trying to reconcile their differences on that tax reform bill, what do you foresee which could potentially move this tax burden to a lot of young

Americans?

MR. HASSETT: That's the kind of detail that we're letting Congress work out. The fact is that they're finding the coalitions that they need to pass the bills in the House and the Senate. And we support that process. We support regular order. We support the transparency that leading debate about issues like this.

Sorry, now I said I'd come over here. Yeah.

Q Kevin, thanks for being here. On one of your TV appearances yesterday, you said that an average family, when this is all said and done, could accumulate a savings benefit of \$4,000. That's a lot of money.

MR. HASSETT: That's a lot of money.

Q Can you walk us through that?

MR. HASSETT: Sure. And for those of you -- and I see some nerdy-looking people out there, so I'm sure that there's people that want to do this -- (laughter) -- that we've got two CEA reports that go through this in gory detail. And the fact is that you can get to numbers like that four different ways.

I won't try to do that now in the limited time that we have, but the basic idea is that back when we increased our corporate tax rate from 34 to 35 percent, we were kind of in the middle of the pack of OECD nations. Subsequently, what happened was that countries around the world found that when they cut the corporate tax, that their economic activity increased and the welfare of their workers improved. And then they very often did it again.

A typical country, since our tax increase, has cut its corporate rate two or maybe even three times. And for economists, what that does is it gives us an enormous amount of data to analyze because there are countries that change their rate and countries that don't. And you can compare the experiences of those two types of countries.

There's a big peer-review literature that looks at that, including a paper that's by a German economist -- that's about to come out in the American Economic Review. And what we do is we go through all those papers and we have charts that show, well, if this paper is true, what wage effect do you get. And most of the action is well north of \$4,000. And that's where the number comes from.

I'll go in the middle, with the orange tie.

Q One of the criticisms, Kevin, of the tax reform proposal is that the corporate tax rate is cut permanently. The individual tax rate phases out after 10 years. Why, in your view, is that such a good idea?

MR. HASSETT: So the President supports permanent tax cuts for the middle class and

permanent tax cuts for corporations. And that's certainly the objective of the planners of this tax bill. But there are also Senate budget rules and reconciliation rules that are required to allow this bill to move forward with 51 votes.

Of course, the hope for everybody is that when the time comes for these things to expire, that they get extended, as happens -- I might add -- even for the top marginal rate when President Obama came into office. And so they extended most of the Bush tax cuts. But even the top rate, at the beginning -- which interestingly they must have done because they knew that if you were to increase the top marginal tax rate during a recession, that it would be very harmful for the economy.

So, back then, there was bipartisan support for the idea that you should not lift the top marginal rate. And so there should be bipartisan support. There would be economic growth effects of bringing it down right now.

I'll go back down into the middle there.

Q Hi, Emma Robinson, One America News. The two bills are different in that the House bill repeals or does away with the estate tax and the Senate doesn't. And I know that was a big point for the administration, and Vice President Pence has voiced his support for repealing the death tax, as they call it. What are your thoughts on that? And do you think a final bill will include a repeal of it?

MR. HASSERTT: I think that -- again, that's one of the things that the Senate and the House are working out. I know that the President very strongly favors the elimination of the death tax. And if that is in the final bill, I'm sure that he'll be happy about that. But he's listed his non-negotiables, and those non-negotiables I cited at the beginning.

I'll go back to the far back now.

Q Thank you, Kevin. I appreciate it. Can you talk about this moment earlier in the week at the Wall Street Journal event? Gary Cohn was on stage, and the moderator asked a group of CEOs, "If tax reform passes, who here is going to increase their investment?" And only a couple of hands went up in the room. Gary Cohn said, why aren't there more hands going up?

Can you answer that question? Why aren't there more hands going up in a room like that? You would assume that CEOs would say, yes, in fact, we are going to invest more if tax reform passes. Is the administration missing something there?

MR. HASSETT: So that's a great question. And I went on a little bit after Gary Cohn, and when they asked that question, it was kind of hard for me because, like here, they are really bright lights, but even brighter there, and so I couldn't quite see how many hands there were. But when I was there, it looked like maybe about half the hands went up. And I think if you go back and look, that it could be that people had time to think about it.

But as an economist, if I go back and look at the academic literature, very often people survey CFOs, and they say, hey, if we change the tax code, would you guys do anything? And they tend to always answer "no" in surveys. But if you look at the hard evidence about what they do, imagine if they didn't respond to taxes, then they wouldn't be pursuing their fiduciary duty to maximize profits for their shareholders. So it would be totally irrational for them to do that. And firms that did act rationally in response to the tax code would put them out of business by taking advantage of the tax code.

So the point is -- the hard evidence is that people do respond. In fact, one of my very, very first papers that I ever wrote when I got out of grad school is the Brookings papers where we looked at the 1986 tax act, the changes that it made to the business tax code and how it affected investment. And there were very large effects.

Right here in the front.

Q Yes, yes. Gene Sperling, who was once in your position in another administration, says that this tax plan -- be it historic -- costs \$1.5 trillion and it's a deficit hole. And he says that basically -- this is in a tweet. I'm just paraphrasing his tweet. He says, it basically doesn't justify that cost for 100 million households for a tax increase.

MR. HASSETT: Well, I respect Gene a great deal and consider him a friend, and I disagree with him about that. And I'm sure we'll at some point have a chance to talk about that.

But here's the way I think about it and what I would say to Gene if he was here: That if you look at the Joint Tax Committee's score, in the 10th year they say that the tax bill costs about \$170 billion. If you look at the CBO projection of GDP, then in the 10th year GDP is about \$28 trillion. And so the amount of deficit that you're talking relative to GDP in the 10th year is only

0.6 percent. It doesn't take a heck of a lot of economic growth to cover that hole by the 10th year.

And so the idea that right now we have the highest corporate tax on Earth generating almost no revenue -- because people avoid the tax by moving factories to Ireland -- that if we fix that, if we repair it and make the U.S. an attractive place again, that it's going to blow a hole in the deficit -- it's just not economically rational.

And I know that the Joint Tax Committee score says what it says, and I respect the professionals in that staff, but the fact is that the OECD has a study, which we'd be happy to email you, that says that the U.S. in the corporate tax space is on the wrong side of the Laffer Curve; that we've got such a high corporate tax rate that we're chasing business offshore and losing revenue.

And so the idea that this blows a hole in the deficit I think is just incorrect.

I'll go to the purple tie.

Q I want to pick up where John, right in front of me, left off when he asked about the phase-out on the individual side. You're an economist; however, the two answers that you gave were both political. One, there's reconciliation rules. And two, hopefully politicians down the line solve it. But like I mentioned, you're an economist. So can you not make an economic argument as to why this is good economically for people?

MR. HASSETT: Oh, is it good for things to expire?

Q Correct. Is there an economic argument as to why this is good for the country as it stands right now to expire within eight years or so?

MR. HASSETT: If you lower marginal tax rates, broaden the base, lower rates, give the

middle class a tax cut, if you cut the corporate rate -- if you do any of those things, they're positive for economic growth. And they're less positive for growth if they expire.

Expensing is kind of a strange thing in the sense that if you have expensing for a year, if you go back and look at U.S. history, very often in recessions, they'll put in expensing for a year to try to stimulate the economy. When expensing expires, it could actually have a short-run stimulus because people try to buy capital before the thing goes away.

But for the most part, permanent tax cuts are far more impactful than things that expire -- which is why if you go back and look at the Obama administration, when they were here during the beginning of the Great Recession, they even extended the Bush tax cuts at the top because they understood this.

Can I go right here? And then I'll come to you, and then that might be the last question because Sarah is standing.

Q I actually want to follow up on that, though. You all made a value judgment to make the corporate tax cuts permanent and to make the individual tax cuts expire, even though you want all of them to be permanent. What's the rationale for having corporations have that certainty of knowing that they don't have to worry about what's going to happen in Washington while families are going to have to worry about what politicians do six, seven years now?

MR. HASSETT: Sure. Well, those are the kind of things that are being worked out by Congress in order to create a bill that under Senate and House rules can become law. And the non-negotiables for us are both met in both bills, and we consider that good news. But the choices that the Senate has to make in order to acquire a coalition to make this law are choices that the Senate has to make. And we don't want to get in front of that process.

Q You don't see the value one way or the other, whether the corporate tax cuts versus --

MR. HASSETT: I think tax cuts that are permanent, of course, will have large positive effects.

I'll give you the last.

Q Kevin, you've melded politics and economics here quite successfully, and I want to ask you a political and economic question. You've talked about growth covering what the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Tax Committee say could be a deficit hole, a deficit implication of \$1.5 trillion. That is going to be measurable over time. There's going to be a means by which either dynamic scoring or static scoring answers that question.

And since it's on the mind of some of your undecided Republican senators, is this administration willing to commit to a review five years in to see if the growth models have held along your lines and the deficit implications aren't as large -- or, if they aren't, to reassess these tax cuts in order not to blow a hole in the deficit?

MR. HASSETT: You know, I have not discussed with the President, and I don't think Sarah has, what we're willing to commit to in terms of what we do five years from now. But I can tell you --

Q Do you think there would be --

MR. HASSETT: But let me talk about what we can be clear about today, which is that, as the President came into office, the President's opponents were saying that 2 percent growth was inevitable, that we were stuck in a secular stagnation; that the President's policies couldn't deliver 3 percent growth, and that it was a cockamamie idea to assert it.

We've had two quarters in a row of 3 percent growth. If you look at the fourth quarter data, it's suggesting -- at the Atlanta Fed, they have GDPNow, which is about 3.2 as of yesterday. So it's saying that we're growing at 3 percent. If we take that momentum into next year and add a tax cut, then we're quite confident that one should be able to expect sustained growth at that level or above.

With that, I think I have to hand it back to Sarah. Thank you so much for being so gracious with your questions.

MS. SANDERS: Thank you, Kevin. Major, he's right, I haven't spoken to the President about that. But I do appreciate that you know that the President will still be here in five years. So, I like that vote of confidence that you would know that we will be here to take that review, and we'll be sure to raise that with him.

Let me go back here.

Q Thanks, Sarah. I have a non-Roy Moore question for you. Can you say definitively -- I want to ask you about Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri. Can you say definitively, from this podium, that he has not been held hostage by the Saudis? And does the President plan to speak to Prime Minister Hariri at all?

MS. SANDERS: I'm not aware of any anticipated conversations. That's something I'd have to check on and get back to you. And I don't have any further comment beyond that at this point right now. And I would refer you to the State Department on specifics of that.

Cecilia.

Q Thanks, Sarah. If it's fair to investigate Al Franken and the allegation made by his accuser, is it also fair to investigate this President and the allegations of sexual misconduct made against him by more than a dozen women?

MS. SANDERS: Look, I think that this was covered pretty extensively during the campaign. We addressed that then. The American people, I think, spoke very loud and clear when they elected this President.

Q But how is this different?

MS. SANDERS: I think in one case, specifically, Senator Franken has admitted wrongdoing, and the President hasn't. I think that's a very clear distinction.

Major.

Q So I want to revisit something we discussed yesterday. You said, one of the ways that Alabama voters might be able to figure out if these allegations against Roy Moore are true is in the court of law. That's a direct quote from you. There's no criminal means by which that could happen. So are you suggesting that Roy Moore sue the accusers in order to hash this out in court?

MS. SANDERS: That would be something that I would refer to him to make that decision. That's not something I would be able to advise on.

Q But that's the venue you meant when you talked about "in the court of law."

MS. SANDERS: I said that's one option, one way to determine that process. But that would be a decision that he would have to make, certainly not one I'm going to make.

Q The only reason I raise that is because, during the campaign, as you well remember, then-candidate Trump said, after the election he would sue all the women who have accused him of sexual misconduct, and that you have, from the podium, deemed all liars. He hasn't done that. Why hasn't he done that?

MS. SANDERS: I haven't asked him that question. I'd have to ask him and let you know why he hasn't chosen to take that path. I'm simply stating that's an option that Roy Moore has on the table.

Jeff.

Q Sarah, some critics have said that it was hypocritical of the President to tweet about Al Franken and not weigh in on Roy Moore.

MS. SANDERS: He has weighed in on Roy Moore. He did it while he was on a foreign trip in Asia. I did it repeatedly yesterday. In fact, I took about 15 questions on that topic and only one on Al Franken. So to suggest that this White House and, specifically, that this President hasn't weighed in is just inaccurate and wrong. He weighed in; he said, if the allegations are true, he should step aside. He also weighed in when he supported the RNC's decision to withdraw resources from the state of Alabama. It's just a simply inaccurate statement to make about the President.

Sara.

Q Can you tell us whether the President believes the women who are making these allegations against Roy Moore? And would he be willing to ask the Alabama governor to delay the election or take a step like that to try to intervene in this electoral process in Alabama?

MS. SANDERS: The President certainly finds the allegations extremely troubling. As I stated yesterday, he feels like it's up to the governor and the state -- the people in the state of Alabama to make a determination on whether or not they delay that election or whether or not they support and vote for Roy Moore.

Matthew.

Q Thank you, Sarah. In light of the national discussion about the importance of taking these kinds of accusations seriously, I wanted to check: Is it still the White House position that all the women who have accused the President of sexual misconduct are lying?

MS. SANDERS: The President has spoken about this multiple times throughout the campaign and has denied all of those allegations.

Blake.

Q Thanks, Sarah. Let me ask you about something else -- the pending potential AT&T and Time Warner merger. The President had said on the campaign trail, back in October of 2016 -- and I quote here -- he said it was a "deal we will not approve in my administration because it's too much concentration of power in the hands of too few." Does the President still feel that way?

MS. SANDERS: The President was asked about this a few days ago, maybe a week ago, while we were on Air Force One, and I'd refer you back to those comments.

April.

Q Sarah, is this an uncomfortable conversation about these sexual allegations for this White House be it Al Franken or be it Roy Moore?

MS. SANDERS: I think it's an uncomfortable conversation for the country. I think that this is something that is being discussed pretty widely, and we certainly think that it should be taken very seriously. And it's one of the reasons I stand up here and answer your questions every day, and will continue to do so and continue to address them.

Obviously, it's something that should be looked at, and I think it should be looked at widespread not just in the political sphere, but in the business atmosphere and across the board in this country. And it's something we certainly again take seriously.

Q A follow-up.

MS. SANDERS: Alex. We're tight on time today.

Q I talked to Hillary Clinton today about the President's past -- and going back to what Matthew said, she said, look, I worry about everything from his past because it tells you how he

behaves in the present and will in the future. What do you say to that as it relates to these allegations against the President?

MS. SANDERS: I think Hillary Clinton probably should have dealt with some of those of her own issues before addressing this President.

Alex.

Q Two questions. One on taxes, then immigration. A recent Quinnipiac University poll said 61 percent of voters think the Republican tax plan will benefit the wealthy while the White House has pitched this plan as a working-class tax cut. Why the disconnect?

And then on immigration --

MS. SANDERS: Let me answer that first question.

Q Okay.

MS. SANDERS: Look, we've actually argued that this tax plan benefits all Americans. That's the point of it. Specifically, our priority is to target middle-class Americans and make sure that that is addressed first and that those people are prioritized in any piece of legislation for either the House or the Senate.

But at the same time, we want all Americans to benefit by a growing economy and a tax system that actually works for our country versus one that penalizes people.

We're going to keep moving just because we're tight.

John.

Q Let me come back and ask you the same thing I asked Kevin. You've got six Republican senators either "no" or seriously on the fence here. Can you win enough over in order to pass this? And if the President gets snookered again by the Senate, what's his reaction going to be?

MS. SANDERS: We certainly are still very confident that we're going to get this package passed, and we'd love to see some of the Democrats come on board and support this historic piece of legislation that we feel will be one of the great legacies of this presidency.

Q The fact that you didn't get any Democrats in the House, how does that portend for getting them in the Senate?

MS. SANDERS: There's always hope. We'll hold out hope that Democrats in the Senate want to put partisan politics aside and put the people of this country first. We haven't ruled it, and we're certainly going to keep pushing forward. And we're still confident we're going to get it done.

Q Safe to say the President will not be pleased if he gets snookered by the Senate again?

MS. SANDERS: I think the American people will be the ones that won't be pleased, because they're going to be the ones that lose out the most if this doesn't go forward.

Toluse.

MS. SANDERS: Thanks, Sarah. The administration put out a disaster funding request for about \$44 billion today. It's much less than what a number of different governors and officials in the various affected territories and states have requested. Can you explain sort of why the

number is so low compared to what the local officials say they need?

MS. SANDERS: I don't think \$44 billion is a low amount. And my guess is if you ask any average citizen across this country, they wouldn't feel like it's low either.

But to this point, Texas has not put any state dollars into this process. We feel strongly that they should step up and play a role and work with the federal government in this process. We did a thorough assessment, and that was completed, and this was the number that we put forward to Congress today.

Q Are you expecting (inaudible) much more requests forward in the future, specifically for Puerto Rico?

MS. SANDERS: Yeah, absolutely. At this point, the request that went in today of the roughly \$44 billion primarily addresses Texas and Florida. Those storms took place ahead of Puerto Rico, and the assessment for Puerto Rico hasn't been completed yet. Once that's done, we fully anticipate that there will be additional requests at that time.

Kristen.

Q Sarah, thank you. Steven Bannon is sending a strong message to the establishment to back off of Roy Moore. Does the President's allegiance to Steve Bannon in any way implicate his response?

MS. SANDERS: The President doesn't have an allegiance to Steve Bannon. The President has an allegiance to the people of this country and nothing else.

Q Has he spoken at all to Steve Bannon or any outside advisors?

MS. SANDERS: Not that I'm aware of. Not that I'm aware of.

Q How concerned is he, Sarah, about losing this seat to a Democratic candidate, who, right now, according to the polls, is leading?

MS. SANDERS: Look, I think that the President is less concerned about the seat and more focused on the policy and the legislation that we're pushing through right now, like tax reform.

John.

Q Thanks a lot, Sarah. Just in regards to that question regarding the supplemental requests: The President and the administration has put forth \$44 million. Puerto Rico has requested \$94 million. Are they going to get somewhere along that order? I think half of the island is still without electricity.

MS. SANDERS: As I said, we're going to wait until that assessment is complete and we'll make a determination at that point and see what the best path forward is.

Q Did the President notify Governor Abbott --

MS. SANDERS: Sorry, I'm going to keep it brief.

Q Did the President notify Governor Abbott of the lesser amount that he's put forward?

MS. SANDERS: John, I'm going to keep moving. I'm going to try be respectful of your colleagues.

Q Yesterday, the joint investigative mechanism was vetoed by Russia at the U.N. Security Council, and Ambassador Haley tweeted afterward that the veto proves that Russia cannot be trusted as a partner going forward in trying to solve the political situation in Syria.

Does the President have any response to the veto, first? What is the U.S. view, going forward, of how chemical weapons will be investigated and dealt with in Syria? And is it the U.S. position now that Russia cannot be a partner in trying to solve, or do a next-day political situation by --

MS. SANDERS: I think by the actions that the President's taken specific to chemical weapons, I think he's shown his position on that with a strike in Syria earlier this year.

In terms of Russia's veto, it's certainly not one we support. We do hope that, moving forward, they want to get on board and work with us on this. But at the same time, this isn't something that we support their decision on.

Steven.

Q There's been some extraordinary pushback on the administration's decisions with respect to elephant trophies and hunting of lions and elephants in Africa. Can you shed some light on the decisions the administration has made? And will you make that pushback?

MS. SANDERS: Yeah, this is actually due to a review that started back in 2014, under the previous administration, done by career officials at the Fish and Wildlife Service. This review established that both Zambia and Zimbabwe had met new standards, strict international conservation standards that allowed Americans to resume hunting in those countries.

A ban on importing elephant ivory from all country remains in place. But again, all of this was based on a study that was conducted -- that started back to the previous administration and done by career officials.

Darlene.

Q The senate tax bill has a tax break for corporate jets. How does that help the middle class?

MS. SANDERS: As Kevin stated before, this administration has laid out the priorities that we want to see reflected in this legislation. We're going to continue to fight for those priorities and let the legislative process work through.

In terms of those specific pieces, that's something I would refer you to members of the House and senate on that. But our focus is on making sure these priorities are answered and met.

We'll make this the last one.

Q Thank you, Sarah. Yesterday -- on Jared Kushner and on his campaign e-mails -- that Senate Committee, they're asking for those e-mails in the Russia investigation. You punted it to the Kushner's attorney. Today, what's the White House reaction to those previously undisclosed e-mails?

MS. SANDERS: Look, as I said, they were going to put out a statement; they did. And I would refer you back to that on anything specific to that inquiry.

Thanks so much, guys. Hope you have a happy Friday and a good weekend. We'll see you on Monday.

END

3:41 P.M. EST

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 2/8/2018 6:11:57 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses: PELOSI says she will vote against budget deal -- COOK POLITICAL REPORT moves 21 races towards Dems -- DOW DOWN 600 -- MCCONNELL's judicial win

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)) and ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

Good Thursday afternoon. THE MOOD IN THE CAPITOL has gotten appreciably better -- for the time being.

-- **HOUSE MINORITY LEADER NANCY PELOSI** told reporters that she would vote against the budget deal, but did not say she would urge Democrats to vote against it. She plans to merely tell her colleagues why she's against it. (By the way, she said it was a good bill that she worked on, but it was coming up under unfortunate circumstances.) This will allow Democrats who want to vote for the bill the leeway to do so. **PELOSI** said she wanted Ryan to agree to put every immigration bill on the floor -- a process called "queen of the hill," in which the highest vote getter is the one that passes.

-- **DEMOCRATS ARE URGING A NO VOTE ... THE WHIP EMAIL** from **HOUSE MINORITY WHIP STENY HOYER** said "DEMOCRATS ARE URGED TO VOTE NO ON THE BUDGET DEAL." The whip email says the bill "Fails to provide a path forward on protecting DREAMers." Many Democrats privately tell us they want to vote yes on this bill and have, in their mind, separated the funding fight from DACA.

-- **SPEAKER PAUL RYAN** did not guarantee anything on immigration, but said: "We will bring a DACA solution to the floor. ... I can't speak to what our rule is going to look like. I can say that we're going to bring a DACA solution to the floor because we want to solve this problem."

BY THE WAY ... RYAN said he doesn't "know If i could've hacked that for eight hours" -- referring to Pelosi's marathon speech Wednesday. He said he would've had to use the restroom in that time period.

THE FIRST VOTE SERIES IN THE HOUSE was calm, and the body language was not tense.

IT'S UNCLEAR what time this could get a vote today. We hear mid afternoon in the Senate, but **SEN. RAND PAUL (R-KY)** is threatening to pump the breaks...

-- **WSJ'S KRISTINA PETERSON (@kristinapet)**: "Rand Paul says he will agree to speed up a Senate vote if leaders agree to vote on his amendment to abide by spending caps. 'But they're resisting now, so we'll see what happens...'"

OF COURSE, this vote is fluid. Moods -- and dynamics -- shift quickly.

BY THE WAY: THE DOW IS DOWN more than 600 points today.

DON'T CALL IT A WAVE, BUT... COOK POLITICAL REPORT released its latest ratings for House races, and it shifted **21 RACES** towards Democrats. Three races -- CA-10, MN-03 and NY-22 moved from "lean R" to tossup and three open seats -- NH-01, NJ-02 and PA-07 moved from toss-up to "lean D". ***The breakdown from David Wasserman*** <http://bit.ly/2Bk5RL2>

-- **"Democrats expand battleground, target 101 GOP seats,"** by NBC News' Alex Seitz-Wald: "At House Democrats' annual conference Thursday, Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., the chairman of the [DCCC], is expected to tell colleagues the committee is expanding the battleground to include 101 Republicans - the largest in a decade, a Democratic source familiar with the matter told NBC News.

"The seven new targets push Democrats even deeper into Republican territory in South Carolina, Wisconsin and Texas. And they include the Ohio seat held by the man charged with defending the GOP's majority, [NRCC] Chair Rep. Steve Stivers, R-Ohio. (Republicans are also targeting Lujan.)" <http://nbcnews.to/2Bi74SM>

YOU DON'T SAY -- "George W. Bush: 'Clear evidence Russians meddled' in election," by USA Today's Kim Hjelmgaard: "Former President George W. Bush appeared to take aim at President Trump on Thursday when he said at an economic summit in the Middle East that there was 'pretty clear evidence that the Russians meddled' in the 2016 U.S. president election. ...

"While Bush did not directly name Trump, his comments did appear to target him. Trump has consistently disputed allegations of Russian interference in the election or that members of his campaign team in any way 'colluded' with Moscow. 'Whether [Russia] affected the outcome is another question,' Bush added." <https://usat.ly/2BqvlN4>

***** **A message from Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses:** Small businesses are the cornerstones of communities across America. This month, Goldman Sachs is continuing its commitment to small business by hosting the *10,000 Small Businesses Summit* in Washington, DC-connecting business owners with policy makers. Learn how we can #MakeSmallBig on February 13 and 14: GS.com/10KSBSummit *****

BUILD THE WALL? -- "House Intel Republicans plan to wall off their aides from Democratic staffers," by CBS News' Olivia Victoria Gazis: "In a sign of increasing partisan hostilities, Republicans on the House Intelligence Committee plan to construct

a wall - a physical partition - separating Republican and Democratic staff members in the committee's secure spaces, according to multiple committee sources. It's expected to happen this spring. For now, some Republican committee members deny knowing anything about it, while strongly suggesting the division is the brainchild of the committee's chairman, Devin Nunes, R-California." <http://cbsn.ws/2BjhMJ1>

MCCONNELL'S BIG WIN -- "Inside Trump's Plan to Dramatically Reshape U.S. Courts," by TIME's Tessa Berenson: Mitch "McConnell knew Trump had a chance to change the ideological makeup of the federal court system in a way not seen since the Reagan era, but only if McConnell and [White House counsel Don] McGahn could get him to tighten up a disorderly political operation, and fast. 'I said, Don, we've got an opportunity here to have a huge long-term impact on the country,' McConnell recalls, sitting in a cushioned chair in his Capitol office one day last month. He made McGahn a promise to move qualified judges through the Senate confirmation process as quickly as the White House could send them. ... 'We're filling up the courts with really talented people who understand and read the Constitution for what it says,' Trump tells TIME. 'It's already having a tremendous impact. These appointments are going to be one of the most important things, if not the most important thing, we do.' ...

"This plan to change America for generations isn't happening by chance. Trump's team has created a streamlined process in the White House and Senate that maximizes the opportunity he's been handed. They've razed congressional customs and carefully nurtured the relationship between the President and conservative legal scholars. In the process, McConnell, McGahn and a constellation of advisers have unclogged the judicial pipeline, pushing nominees onto the courts faster than ever before. The result, McConnell believes, could be Trump's most consequential bequest. 'The tax bill was hugely important, but as soon as the government changes, believe me, they'll revisit the tax code,' McConnell tells TIME. 'The impact that this Administration could have on the courts is the most long-lasting impact we could have.'" <http://ti.me/2EuUyl6>

HMM... -- "GOP leans on rainmaker who courts controversy on two continents," by Ben Wieder and Peter Stone in McClatchy: "As a top fundraiser for the Republican Party under President Donald Trump, investment manager Elliott Broidy has had a seat at some of the most exclusive GOP money bashes at the Trump International Hotel and Mar-a-Lago. It might seem like a pinnacle moment in the career of a big-money harvester. Broidy's success, however, hasn't followed a typical trajectory: In 2012, he was convicted in a New York 'pay to play' pension scandal that cost him millions and forced him to the political sidelines. ... A McClatchy investigation shows that Broidy, who has re-emerged as a valuable deputy RNC finance chair, is linked to controversial figures, at home and abroad, with their own recent legal troubles.

"A small defense contractor Broidy owns opened an office last year in Romania just months after Broidy helped introduce a top Romanian politician facing corruption charges there to Trump. At home, the firm has seen a big spike in business since Trump took office - and after it lobbied the office of Vice President Mike Pence. And a few years before Trump took office, Broidy, a longtime board member of the hawkish

Republican Jewish Coalition, headed up a national security-focused nonprofit group set up - and partially funded - by two movie producers who have been charged by federal prosecutors with defrauding investors of millions. Despite a showy debut, the nonprofit soon vanished from the scene, never filing required tax forms." <http://bit.ly/2EbpmUH>

AFTERNOON READ -- "Here's what war with North Korea would look like," by Vox's Yochi Dreazen: "There is a genuine risk of a war on the Korean Peninsula that would involve the use of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. ... [M]ost of the people I spoke to said they believed Kim would use nuclear weapons against South Korea in the initial stages of the fighting -- not just as a desperate last resort. ... The nonpartisan Congressional Research Service estimates that Kim could hammer the South Korean capital with an astonishing 10,000 rockets per minute -- and that such a barrage could kill more 300,000 South Koreans in the opening days of the conflict. That's all without using a single nuclear, chemical, or biological weapon. ... A new war on the Korean Peninsula wouldn't be as bad as you think. It would be much, much worse. ...

"The consensus view is that Kim would try to level the playing field by using his vast arsenal of chemical weapons, which is believed to be the biggest and most technologically advanced in the world. ... Kim has the ability to quickly blanket the densely packed city with huge amounts of nerve agents. The human toll would be staggeringly high: The military historian Reid Kirby estimated last June that a sustained sarin attack could kill up to 2.5 million people in Seoul alone, while injuring nearly 7 million more. Men, women, and children would very literally choke to death in the streets of one of the world's wealthiest and most vibrant cities. It would be mass murder on a scale rarely seen in human history." <http://bit.ly/2FY2wQz>

OH BOY ... -- OMAROSA on a preview of tonight's episode of "Celebrity Big Brother": "I was haunted by tweets every single day. Like what is he going to tweet next?" <http://bit.ly/2EqYDGN>

VALLEY TALK -- "The House That Spied on Me," by Gizmodo's Kashmir Hill and Surya Mattu: "In December, I converted my one-bedroom apartment in San Francisco into a 'smart home.' I connected as many of my appliances and belongings as I could to the internet ... After a week of living in my newly smartened home, I could tell why the Beast was always in such a bad mood: The animate objects in my home were becoming a constant source of annoyance. I thought this was going to be a story about privacy, but instead I was finding out how infuriating it is to live in a janky smart home." <http://bit.ly/2BLIE6n>

MEDIAWATCH -- "New York Times Co. Subscription Revenue Surpassed \$1 Billion in 2017," by NYT's Sydney Ember: "The company said on Thursday that it added 157,000 net digital-only subscriptions in the fourth quarter of the year, pushing overall subscription revenue to more than \$1 billion for the year. Subscription revenue now accounts for 60 percent of the company's total revenue. Subscription revenue in the quarter rose 19 percent. Total revenue for the year increased 8 percent, to \$1.7

billion, and 10 percent in the fourth quarter, to \$484 million." <http://nyti.ms/2EoRPJZ>

-- **TONY ROMM** is joining The Washington Post as a tech policy reporter. He is currently a senior editor at Recode and is a POLITICO alum.

SPOTTED: Preet Bharara at the bar of Gaslight in Shaw on Tuesday night

SPOTTED at a dinner hosted by Meridian and Japanese Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae on the role of sports diplomacy: Cal Ripken, Jr., Ambassador Jim Cain (the former president of the Carolina Hurricanes), Ambassador Mark Gilbert (a former White Sox player), Michael Ledecy, former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue, Jimmy Lynn, Stuart and Gwen Holliday, Brad Knox, Steve Morrissey and Sasha Johnson, Tom Monahan, Ed Cohen, Josh Wachs, Jodie McLean, Adam Bernstein, Alan Bubes and Nancy Taylor Bubes.

TRANSITIONS -- Nicole Brener-Schmitz is joining NARAL as political director. She previously worked for former Rep. Brian Baird (D-Fla.) and with the Teamsters.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Poppy Harlow, co-anchor of "CNN Newsroom" from 9 to 11 a.m. on weekdays, and **Sinisa Babcic**, a senior manager at EY, post on Instagram: "Welcome to the world baby Luca! We love all 9lbs, 22 inches of you to pieces!" *Instapic* <http://bit.ly/2BKpdtz> ... *Pic on Twitter* <http://bit.ly/2ENfwJu>

-- **Joe Ahearn**, finance director of America First Policies/America First Action, and **Megan Ahearn**, who works for the digital agency Huge Inc., yesterday welcomed James Joseph Ahearn. "James was born ... at 8:16 a.m. His stats: 7 pounds, 9 ounces; 20.5 inches. Baby James, Mom, Dad, and Big Sister Rose are doing great!"

--**Anderson Heiman**, senior adviser for technology for Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and the Senate Finance Committee, and **Aileen Gleizer**, associate director for emergency health programs and operations at Save the Children, recently welcomed Mila Lee Heiman. "She weighed in at 9 lbs 10 oz, 21.75 inches. Mila was the Russian nickname for Aileen's grandpa, and Lee is Andy's father's first name and mother's middle name." *Pics* <http://bit.ly/2C4hHWn> ... <http://bit.ly/2GZd5UP>

***** **A message from Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses:** There are more than 29 million small businesses in the United States. All of their voices matter, but all of their voices are not always heard. That is why Goldman Sachs is hosting the *10,000 Small Businesses* Summit in Washington, DC-one of the largest gatherings of small business owners on job creation. Learn how we can #MakeSmallBig on February 13 and 14: GS.com/10KSBSummit *****

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To: Skolnik, Samuel[sskolnik@bgov.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 7:08:08 PM
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“The Definers contract is for news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:08 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:07 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Skolnik, Samuel [<mailto:sskolnik@bgov.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:42 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Hi Jahan –

I just sent the following email to press@epa.gov, but wanted to make sure I got some kind of response today. My questions are regarding Definers Corp.

Any help appreciated,

Sam

--

Hi all. I cover federal contracting and procurement issues for Bloomberg Government, and am working on a daily story based off of reports that EPA today has dropped the contract with Definers Corp. to help the EPA shape press coverage of the agency, through a no-bid contract.

Questions:

1 – Why did EPA drop the Definers contract?

2 – Why was this a sole-source solicitation in the first place?

3 – How did EPA decide to solicit the work from Definers Corp. specifically?

4 – What did EPA need to do to justify this as a sole-source solicitation? Did the agency do what it needed to, to abide the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other pertinent laws? What exactly was that?

5 – Does EPA believe there are inherent risks to agencies, and by extension taxpayers, in no-bid contracts? If so, what are they?

I'm looking for comment (or EPA's written thoughts, attributable to Jahan Wilcox or whoever the right person might be) by 4 p.m. today. My contact info is below.

Thank you,

Sam

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

Direct: (202) 416-3328

Cell: (702) 755-5729 *(On Fridays, please call my Cell)*

sskolnik@bgov.com

@samskolnik

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 6/29/2017 12:50:31 PM
Subject: RE: Definers

George –

I don't care how this happens but we need to make this happen as quickly as possible.

I'm trying to get a clip from an MSNBC show that is time sensitive and can't grab it because it's not online yet. We miss a lot of clips that happen overnight or on the weekends and we need a solution to fix this.

Thank you.

Jahan

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:57 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

That makes sense. I'm asking Joe to give me a demo. I would do it on Thursday, but I have to take the day off for a family matter. If you would like to be part of the demo, I could find another day. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:55 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

Thanks man! I am out on Friday but the rapid response clips are helpful and the interns doing a great job but we miss stuff late at night.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:53 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

I'm trying to get a time set up with him on Friday. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:52 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Where are we on setting up a call with Joe. I really don't need to do a call, I know the quality of their product. Last night a story about in the NYT and would've been nice to have someone at the helm to send that out as it happened.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 10/5/2017 10:40:23 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Koch Industries: NEW NARRATIVE: Republicans signal they'll target bump stocks -- Frustrated GOP donors say they'll stop giving to Republican lawmakers -- FEW CLUES in Vegas -- TRUMP meeting with Tom Cotton today

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Koch Industries

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Driving the Day

Good Thursday morning. THE NEW NARRATIVE: At 9:26 p.m. last night, the New York Times alerted a story with this headline: "Top Republicans, long resistant to gun regulations, said they may be open to banning a rapid-fire device used by the Las Vegas gunman." (The Times story <http://nyti.ms/2hOWdbA>) The Times is spot on. This is a major topic of conversation on the Hill. **WHY?** Many lawmakers privately tell us they know have to do something this time around. Most every Republican aligns with the NRA. But a device that allows anyone to mow down dozens of people is a different story. Anna was saying yesterday on the way to the Capitol that this would be the biggest gun control measure in years, and it would be tough for the NRA to stand in the way. **Check out these quotes:**

-- **SENATE MAJORITY WHIP JOHN CORNYN (R-TEXAS)** to the NYT: "I own a lot of guns, and as a hunter and sportsman, I think that's our right as Americans, but I don't understand the use of this bump stock. It seems like it's an obvious area we ought to explore and see if it's something Congress needs to act on."

-- **SENATE HOMELAND SECURITY CHAIRMAN RON JOHNSON (R-WIS.)** in a good story by John Bresnahan, Seung Min Kim and Burgess Everett: "Automatic weapons are illegal. If that facilitates that, to me it would be subject to the same ban. If that actually gets on the Senate floor, I'd vote for it."

-- **SEN. JOHN THUNE (R-S.D.)** to Bres, Burgess and SMK: "I think it's something we ought to look into. I don't know a lot about them, and I'm somebody who, I'd like to think, is fairly familiar with a lot of firearms and you know, the use of those. And that incident out there is something that I think we need to take a look at." <http://politi.co/2y2t9TI>

-- **REP. BILL FLORES (R-TEXAS)** to the Hill: "I think they should be banned. There's no reason for a typical gun owner to own anything that converts a semiautomatic to something that behaves like an automatic."

-- **SEN. JAMES LANKFORD (R-OKLA.)** told CBSN he is open to the possibility of bump stock legislation. <http://cbsn.ws/2yZz9e8>

-- **REP. TOM ROONEY (R-FLA.)** pinged us yesterday and said: "Trump needs to take the lead on this bump stock issue. He's the only one that can."

MIGHT THIS FALL FLAT? Sure, the details are very, very important. And betting against the NRA on Capitol Hill in recent years hasn't been a good bet. The group has a massive war chest and an active membership that it has employed on multiple occasions.

-- **WSJ EDITORIAL: "The Gun Control Mirage: More gun laws won't stop mass shootings by determined killers":** "Ah, but what about so-called bump stocks, which Paddock used to simulate quick, automatic-style fire? Outright modification of a firearm into an automatic is already a federal felony punishable by 10 years in prison. Congress could outlaw bump stocks, but how does it outlaw a technique? The practice of quickly 'bumping' a trigger with one's finger to engage in rapid fire long predates bump stocks or other accessories." <http://on.wsj.com/2z0kzTF>

ALERT -- THE HOUSE will vote on their budget today. It's expected to pass, and it paves the way for tax reform. ***Read AP's Andy Taylor for the details***
<http://bit.ly/2wyPyV8>

NEW -- DCCC NATIONAL AD CAMPAIGN -- "Never Stop" -- featuring Paul Ryan as the Democrats' 2018 punching bag ... **30-second spot** <https://youtu.be/LTmx1hfEwWk>

SCOOP -- ALEX ISENSTADT and GABE DEBENEDETTI: "Angry GOP donors close their wallets": "Republicans are confronting a growing revolt from their top donors, who are cutting off the party in protest over its inability to get anything done. Tensions reached a boiling point at a recent dinner at the home of Los Angeles billionaire Robert Day. In full view of around two dozen guests, Thomas Wachtell, a retired oil and gas investor and party contributor, delivered an urgent message to the night's headliner, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell: Just do something.

"Wachtell, who has given tens of thousands of dollars over the years to Senate Republicans, recalled that McConnell responded defensively. Passing legislation takes time, the Republican leader responded, and President Donald Trump didn't seem to understand how long it required. 'Anybody who was there knew that I was not happy. And I don't think anybody was happy. How could you be?' said Wachtell, who has previously given over \$2,000 to McConnell but recently stopped donating to Senate GOP causes. 'You're never going to get a more sympathetic Republican than I am. But I'm sick and tired of nothing happening.'

"With the GOP's agenda at a virtual standstill on Capitol Hill, the party is contending with a hard reality. Some of the party's most elite and influential donors, who spent the past eight years plowing cash into the party's coffers in hopes of accomplishing a sweeping conservative agenda and undoing Barack Obama's legislative accomplishments, are closing their wallets. The backlash is threatening to deprive Republicans of resources just as they're gearing up for the 2018 midterms.

"Party officials are so alarmed that North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis, who oversees fundraising for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, told his colleagues at a recent conference meeting that donations had fallen off a cliff after the Obamacare flop. The committee's haul plummeted to just \$2 million in July and August, less than half of what it raised in June." <http://politi.co/2fSLQ5W>

-- **THIS TRACKS** what we have been hearing for weeks. GOP lawmakers are increasingly nervous about their chances for keeping their Congressional majorities. Behind the scenes, aides and operatives regularly say that if Republicans can't pass tax reform, they will likely lose the House.

-- **NEXT UP: "Roy Moore's disruption of Washington has already begun, and more is on the way,"** by WaPo's Sean Sullivan: <http://wapo.st/2yqcdb7>

THE LATEST IN LAS VEGAS ... -- "Clues few and elusive for motive of Las Vegas gunman," by AP's Ken Ritter and Michael Balsamo in Las Vegas and Sadie Gurman in D.C.: "Those seeking to know the motive of Las Vegas gunman Stephen Paddock have had little more to chase than hints and shadows. Paddock led such a low-key, private life that no one seemed to know him well, and those who did had no sense he was capable of the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history.

"Where other mass killers have left behind a trail of plain-sight clues that help investigators quickly understand what drove them to violence, Paddock, 64, had nearly no close friends, social media presence or other clear connections to the broader world. Even the No. 2 official in the FBI said Wednesday he was surprised investigators have not uncovered more about why a man with no obvious criminal record would cause so much bloodshed.

'There's all kinds of things that surprise us in each one of these events. That's the one in this one, and we are not there yet,' FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe said. 'We have a lot of work to do.'" <http://bit.ly/2hOXjEf>

NYT FRONT PAGE includes a reconstruction of the shooter's room, stitching together photos <http://nyti.ms/2yZrpZM>

-- **"Girlfriend of Las Vegas gunman says she had no idea he was planning attack,"** by WaPo's Mark Berman and Matt Zapotosky: "The girlfriend of Stephen Paddock, the gunman who opened fire on a country music festival in Las Vegas earlier this week, said

Wednesday she had no warning about his plans to carry out the massacre and pledged to cooperate with authorities struggling to determine what sparked the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history. 'I knew Stephen Paddock as a kind, caring, quiet man,' Marilou Danley, Paddock's girlfriend, said in a statement read by her attorney. 'He never said anything to me or took any action that I was aware of that I understood in any way to be a warning that something horrible like this was going to happen.'"

<http://wapo.st/2hNC6u7>

-- **"Las Vegas Gunman Chased Gambling's Payouts and Perks,"** by NYT's John Branch, Serge Kovalski and Sabrina Tavernise: "The video poker machines that Stephen Paddock liked were the ones that did not draw attention. They had few look-at-me flashing lights or listen-to-me bells. He would sit in front of them for hours, often wagering more than \$100 a hand. The way he played -- instinctually, decisively, calculatingly, silently, with little movement beyond his shifting eyes and nimble fingers -- meant he could play several hundred hands an hour. Casino hosts knew him well.

"Not a lot of smiles and friendliness," said John Weinreich, who was an executive casino host at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa in Reno, Nev., where Mr. Paddock was once a regular and where he met his girlfriend. ... His methodical style and his skill level allowed him to gamble, and occasionally win, tens of thousands of dollars in one sitting, collecting payouts and hotel perks in big bunches. Last week, as a reward for his loyalty and gambling, Mr. Paddock stayed free of charge on the 32nd floor in one of the elite suites of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino." <http://nyti.ms/2xiiUvJ>

***** **A message from Koch Industries:** Koch has been the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) first- or second-ranked company for pollution prevention initiatives since 2012. What's more, since 2012, we have implemented more than 1,000 pollution prevention activities across the United States. See how at ChallengeAccepted.com.

IF YOU CLICK ONE THING - "How Las Vegas Police Scrambled to Find the Gunman" -- WSJ: "The following recordings are selected police radio communications from when the shooting started on Sunday shortly after 10:00 p.m. through 11:30 p.m. when police entered the sole shooter's hotel room. This audio reveals the chaos and confusion officers faced while tracking the gunman's location."

<http://on.wsj.com/2kq9s3e>

PIC DU JOUR -- @colincampbell: "Air Force One departs Las Vegas past the broken windows on the Mandalay Bay hotel. (Photo: Mike Blake/Reuters)" <http://bit.ly/2y1aSGc>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "OPEC Pushes Russia to Continue Helping on Oil Prices," by WSJ's Benoit Faucon and Summer Said: "Saudi Arabia and OPEC are lobbying Russia to stay on board with their efforts to raise oil prices, amid signals that Moscow wants to end its participation in costly petroleum-production cuts. The efforts culminate Thursday with a meeting between Saudi King Salman and Russian President Vladimir Putin, in the first-ever visit by a Saudi monarch to Moscow. According to people familiar

with the matter, the king will ask Mr. Putin to remain for longer than planned in a coalition led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries that has withheld almost 2% of global oil supply from the market in 2017." <http://on.wsj.com/2wzp6Lr>

-- **"3 Special Forces Troops Killed and 2 Are Wounded in an Ambush in Niger,"** by NYT's Eric Schmitt: "Three United States Army Special Forces were killed and two were wounded on Wednesday in an ambush in Niger while on a training mission with troops from that nation in northwestern Africa, American military officials said. ... All five American soldiers were Green Berets, said two United States military officials. The attack took place 120 miles north of Niamey, the capital of Niger, near the border with Mali, where militants with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, an affiliate of Al Qaeda, have conducted cross-border raids. ... The deaths represent the first American casualties under hostile fire in a mission in which United States Special Forces have provided training and security assistance to the Nigerien armed forces." <http://nyti.ms/2wyslCD>

MORE TRAVEL QUESTIONS FOR ZINKE -- "Interior secretary draws flak for mixing politics, official travel," by Ben Lefebvre and Esther Whieldon: "Republican donors paid up to \$5,000 per couple for a photo with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke at a fundraiser held during a taxpayer-funded trip to the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to documents reviewed by POLITICO - raising questions about his habit of mixing official government business with political activism.

"The new details about Zinke's March trip to the Caribbean, including the previously undisclosed invitation to the Virgin Islands Republican Party fundraiser, emerged after weeks of scrutiny of the former Montana GOP congressman's travels. The nearly two-hour event was one of more than a half-dozen times Zinke has met with big donors or political groups while on department-paid trips, Interior travel records and other documents show.

"Ethics watchdogs say Zinke is combining politics with his Interior duties so frequently that he risks tripping over the prohibitions against using government resources for partisan activity, even though his appearance at the Virgin Islands event seems to have been legal. Democrats have also seized on the issue, including 26 House members who wrote in a letter Tuesday that Zinke's travels 'give the appearance that you are mixing political gatherings and personal destinations with official business.' Zinke has said all his actions have obeyed the law, dismissing concerns about his travel as 'a little B.S.'" <http://politi.co/2xVbknA>

FOGGY BOTTOM WATCH -- "'Death spiral': Tillerson makes nice but may not last long with Trump," by WaPo's Anne Gearan, Philip Rucker and Ashley Parker: "But Tillerson's move on Wednesday to reassure Trump of his convictions may well be too little and too late for the long term, according to the accounts of 19 current and former senior administration officials and Capitol Hill aides ... The already tense relationship between the two headstrong men - one a billionaire former real estate developer, the other a former captain of the global oil industry -- has ruptured into what some White

House officials call an irreparable breach that will inevitably lead to Tillerson's departure, whether immediately or not. Tillerson's dwindling cohort of allies say he has been given an impossible job and is doing his best with it." <http://wapo.st/2yJhAhE>

-- NYT's Peter Baker, Maggie Haberman and Glenn Thrush: "[T]he deliberate, slow-talking oil executive has little personal chemistry with the quick-talking, impulsive Mr. Trump. Mr. Tillerson has avoided expressing his pique to the president. But aides and Trump associates who have been in the room with them said Mr. Tillerson's body language, eye rolling and terse expressions left little doubt that he disapproves of Mr. Trump's approach. Mr. Trump, they said, has noticed how Mr. Tillerson slouches in his presence, particularly when he disagrees with a decision. When overruled, Mr. Tillerson often says, 'It's your deal,' to the president's irritation, according to two former administration officials." <http://nyti.ms/2yJGQUV>

RICH LOWRY, "Why Tillerson Can't Stay: If he believes what he said about his boss's goals, his best move is to step aside": "Even before his unusual apology speech Wednesday morning, he had become the nation's least influential top diplomat in recent memory. His relationship with the president of the United States is strained at best, he has no philosophy or signature initiative, he has barely staffed his own department, and he's alienated the foreign service. The former CEO of ExxonMobil has taken one of the power positions in the U.S. government and made it an afterthought. ...

"The secretary of state dodged questions about whether he had, indeed, as NBC reported, called Trump a 'moron' - almost certainly the first time in U.S. history a Cabinet official has been asked about personally insulting the president he works for and apparently not been able, in good conscience, to deny it. At his appearance, Tillerson issued a stilted endorsement of the president's 'America First' agenda that felt as if it had been written by someone else or was the product of an internal negotiation." <http://politi.co/2wz8OCa>

--@cspan: ".@SenBobCorker: 'I think Sec. Tillerson, Sec. Mattis and Chief of Staff Kelly are those people that help separate our country from chaos.'" <http://bit.ly/2yJSajl>

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST -- "Embattled GOP Rep. Tim Murphy to retire," by Rachael Bade, Elena Schneider, and John Bresnahan: "Rep. Tim Murphy of Pennsylvania announced Wednesday that he will retire at the end of his term, after allegations that the married lawmaker, who opposes abortion rights, asked his mistress to terminate a pregnancy. Murphy (R-Pa.) admitted several weeks ago to an affair with forensic psychologist Shannon Edwards - news that came to light during the woman's divorce proceedings with her husband.

"After discussions with my family and staff, I have come to the decision that I will not seek reelection to Congress at the end of my current term,' Murphy said in his statement. 'I plan to spend my remaining months in office continuing my work as the national leader on mental health care reform, as well as issues affecting working families in southwestern Pennsylvania.' Murphy added: 'In the coming weeks I will take

personal time to seek help as my family and I continue to work through our personal difficulties and seek healing. I ask you to respect our privacy during this time.'

"Murphy met privately with Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) before his retirement announcement, as well as Pennsylvania GOP Reps. Bill Shuster and Charlie Dent. A number of top Republicans said privately that Murphy should retire or resign in light of the scandal." <http://politi.co/2y18U99>

DRIP, DRIP, DRIP -- "IRS defends Equifax contract amid Hill outcry," by Nancy Scola and Steven Overly: "The IRS on Wednesday sought to justify its new \$7.2 million, no-bid contract with the credit reporting company Equifax, describing it as a short-term arrangement needed to keep vital tools for taxpayers from going offline during a dispute with the firm.

"But its explanations didn't appear to satisfy either Democrats or Republicans in Congress, who continued to express astonishment at the agency's decision to continue partnering with a troubled company that recently suffered a massive breach of sensitive consumer data on as many as 145 million Americans. The IRS quietly awarded the contract Friday afternoon and posted notice of it the next day, as POLITICO first reported Tuesday.

"'You can't make this stuff up,' Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) told reporters Wednesday after a hearing about Equifax's data breach. 'This is like a bad movie. I am stunned that in the middle of this crisis the IRS would decide that it wants to trust Equifax as a business partner. It makes no sense to me. I want to find out what's going on here.'" <http://politi.co/2xVjYTd>

-- **"Liberal groups got IRS scrutiny, too, inspector general suggests,"** by WaPo's Mike DeBonis: "A federal watchdog has identified scores of cases in which the Internal Revenue Service may have targeted liberal-leaning groups for extra scrutiny based on their names or political leanings, a finding that could undermine claims that conservatives were unfairly targeted under President Barack Obama. The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) reviewed cases between 2004 and 2013, which includes the period TIGTA previously examined in a 2013 report that faulted the IRS for using inappropriate political criteria to select groups for heightened scrutiny." <http://wapo.st/2fMlrTr>

TRUMP'S THURSDAY -- Trump will receive an intel briefing and meet with Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) this morning. He is meeting with RNC Chair Ronna Romney McDaniel in the afternoon. He will also be briefed by senior military leaders. Trump and the First Lady will have dinner with senior military leaders and their spouses.

HAPPENING TOMORROW -- "Trump to resume tax cut push in Oval Office meeting with W. Va company - but not Manchin," by Heidi Przybyla in USA Today: "President Trump will resume his push for tax cuts on Friday with an Oval Office meeting designed to highlight the manufacturing industry, including in the state of a

vulnerable incumbent Democratic senator: Joe Manchin of West Virginia. Trump will host more than a dozen manufacturing industry employees and executives and issue a proclamation making Oct. 6 'National Manufacturing Day,' according to a White House statement provided to USA TODAY.

"One key person who won't be there: Manchin. Manchin, who met with White House legislative affairs director Marc Short on Tuesday, can't support the plan outlined last week by GOP congressional negotiators, according to a Manchin aide not authorized to speak publicly. The senator believes the proposed plan differs from the one Trump described during a dinner earlier this month with moderate Democrats and Republicans at the White House, the aide said. The current plan, Manchin believes, benefits the wealthy more than the middle class." <https://usat.ly/2xilFMc>

THE JUICE ...

-- **AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY** is launching a \$4.5 million cable and local network ad buy over the next three weeks, urging Sens. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) and Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) to support tax reform.

-- **POLITICO 50** -- On Oct. 12, POLITICO will host our annual 50 Celebration to honor the POLITICO 50, our list of the thinkers, doers and dreamers reshaping American politics in 2017 - and beyond. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2xdK7Q7>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson delivers a statement at the State Department on Oct. 4 in Washington, D.C. Tillerson denied recent news reports that he had weighed resigning from his post. | Win McNamee/Getty

BANNON'S NEW GUY -- MICHAEL GRIMM <http://politi.co/2xj7lj1>. Grimm is coming off an eight-month term in federal prison.

YIKES -- "NKorean workers prep seafood going to US stores, restaurants," by AP's Tim Sullivan and Hyung-Jin Kim in Hunchun, China and Martha Mendoza in California: "The workers wake up each morning on metal bunk beds in fluorescent-lit Chinese dormitories, North Koreans outsourced by their government to process seafood that ends up in American stores and homes. Privacy is forbidden. They cannot leave their compounds without permission. ... And they are paid a fraction of their salaries, while the rest - as much as 70 percent - is taken by North Korea's government.

"This means Americans buying salmon for dinner at Walmart or ALDI may inadvertently have subsidized the North Korean government as it builds its nuclear

weapons program, an AP investigation has found. Their purchases may also have supported what the United States calls 'modern day slavery' - even if the jobs are highly coveted by North Koreans." <http://bit.ly/2xUmmMI>

RUSSIA WATCH -- "Sally Yates, Preet Bharara Stress High Bar for Criminal Charges in Russia Probe," by WSJ's Erica Orden: "'I know a lot of people are sort of putting all their hopes into Bob Mueller. And I've got tremendous confidence in Bob Mueller,' said Ms. Yates [at the Vanity Fair New Establishment Summit], in one of the few public interviews she has given since she was fired in January ... 'But the fact of the matter is, he's going to determine whether there's proof beyond a reasonable doubt that felonies were committed, that crimes were committed that can be used for prosecution or impeachment,' she said of Mr. Mueller. That, she suggested, is but one standard by which to judge the president's conduct, drawing a distinction between criminal behavior and otherwise objectionable conduct." <http://on.wsj.com/2gcGuzp>

FIRST PERSON -- DAN DIAMOND and RACHANA PRADHAN in Politico Magazine, **"How We Found Tom Price's Private Jets:** A tantalizing tip, followed by months of painstaking reporting, revealed the HHS secretary's extravagant travel habits": "[I]n September, we received an official notice from HHS that Price would be traveling to the Philadelphia area to meet with people affected by addiction to opioid painkillers. By the morning of Sept. 15 - when Price took a private jet to travel between Washington and Philadelphia, a distance of roughly 125 miles - we had figured out that Price was using the private jet terminal at Dulles International Airport, 28 miles outside of Washington.

"That Friday morning, we camped out at the Dulles charter terminal. A little after 8 a.m., we saw two SUVs and a police escort roll directly onto the tarmac, as the cars discharged passengers who then boarded a distinctive 30-seat charter plane with a golden belly.

"By 8:30 a.m., we watched the charter jet take off, heading directly north, and tracked it to Philadelphia using FlightAware, an airline tracking website. It was strong, but it wasn't enough. We hadn't seen the faces of Price or the other passengers - including White House counselor Kellyanne Conway, who went on that opioid trip. Using social media and help from sources, we kept tabs on the movements of Price and Conway in Philadelphia, tracing when they wrapped up the event and headed to the airport. By the time Price boarded the private jet at Philadelphia International Airport for the return trip to Dulles in early afternoon, we had figured out how to get the best view of the Dulles tarmac:

"Rachana drove by the charter jet terminal, timing her approach so she could best see the jet field, while Dan stood in the airport's main terminal, tracking the plane through his phone and counting down its arrival to Rachana, before hustling out to a patch of concrete that offered a view of the tarmac, too. It was enough. We saw the distinctive golden plane taxi around to the private-jet terminal. We saw a man with Price's build and shock of white hair walking across the tarmac. We saw the SUVs and police escort come out to greet him and the other passengers before speeding them

away." <http://politi.co/2xVV9GK>

--"Stakeout at Dulles Airport launched Politico bombshell on Tom Price's charter-flight scandal," by WaPo's Erik Wemple: <http://wapo.st/2yJY9VX>

***** **A message from Koch Industries:** It's one thing to say we're committed to environmental responsibility. But quite another to demonstrate it. This year, Koch was named the EPA's ENERGY STAR® Partner of the Year. The award recognizes organizations that have made outstanding contributions to protecting the environment through energy efficiency. To-date we've invested \$600 million into energy saving initiatives. And over the last five years, we've saved enough energy to power 360,000 households for an entire year. See our contributions at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

HOLLYWOODLAND - "Harvey Weinstein Lawyers Up for Bombshell New York Times, New Yorker Stories," by Variety's Brent Lang, Gene Maddaus and Ramin Setoodeh: "Harvey Weinstein has hired a high-powered team of attorneys to push back on soon-to-be-published bombshell stories from the New York Times and the New Yorker detailing sexual allegations and improper workplace behavior against him. Some women making the charges are believed to be on the record. Weinstein, the indie mogul and founder of the Weinstein Company, has retained star litigator David Boies, as well as attorneys Lisa Bloom and Charles Harder in an effort to rebut the claims. Jodi Kantor, an investigative reporter who wrote about harsh working conditions at Amazon, is working on the story for the Times, along with Megan Twohey ...

"Ronan Farrow, the former MSNBC host, is doing the story for the New Yorker, according to multiple individuals with knowledge of the situation. One individual said that at least one of the stories could be published as early as this week. In a brief interview on Wednesday, Weinstein declined to comment on the charges. ... "Why don't I get, since I must have these high-priced lawyers, let me get them back to talk to you," said Weinstein. Weinstein later issued a statement through a spokesperson, as did Bloom. "The story sounds so good I want to buy the movie rights," said Weinstein."
<http://bit.ly/2yJXUKx>

MEDIAWATCH - "Fox News Expands 'Fox & Friends,' Starting 'First' Broadcast at 4 AM" - Variety: <http://bit.ly/2xWWNlc>

-- **From Michael Calderone's Morning Media: "ADAM ENTOUS TO THE NEW YORKER?** I'm hearing that star Washington Post national security reporter Adam Entous is heading to The New Yorker as a staff writer. The award-winning journalist joined the Post a year ago from The Wall Street Journal. Entous declined to comment."

-- **CHUCK TODD** in NYT Magazine <http://nyti.ms/2gdnQra>

-- **NEWSWEEK RETRACTION** - "Newsweek has retracted its story that reviewed public records of Marilou Danley, the girlfriend of Las Vegas shooter Stephen Paddock [and was headlined ['Paddock's Girlfriend Used Two Social Security Numbers and Was

Married to Two Men at the Same Time']. The initial report was based on the marriage record of Danley, who was known under a different name when she married Geary Danley in Clark County, Nevada. Newsweek mistakenly matched that record to a second public record of a different person. The mistake was revealed when a Newsweek reporter re-interviewed a person who had initially declined to comment for our story. ... Newsweek regrets the error." <http://bit.ly/2xZTqIL>

Playbookers

SUNDAY SO FAR - "Fox News Sunday": Tom Rogan, Julie Pace, Gillian Turner, Juan Williams

SPOTTED -- REP. LOU BARLETTA enjoying wine and a cigar outside Wednesday night. <http://bit.ly/2xSScZR>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Saul Hernandez, deputy chief of staff to Rep. G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.), and **Brittany Johnson Hernandez**, deputy director of federal affairs at the March of Dimes, welcomed Elise Ileana Hernandez, who arrived at 6:57 p.m. on Oct. 3. 7 lbs. 6 oz and 20.5 inches long. **Pic** <http://politi.co/2yqSsQv>

TRANSITIONS -- WARREN BASS, former director of speechwriting and senior policy adviser to Susan Rice at the United Nations, has been named executive editor of Penguin Press. Bass most recently worked as senior editor of the Wall Street Journal's "Review" section.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: MSNBC anchor **Thomas Roberts** is 45. **How he got his start in journalism:** "I graduated from college in 1994 with a communications major and journalism minor. After college I worked as a one-man-band in Maryland. My first BIG break came in 1996. The news director at KNSD (NBC O&O in San Diego) took pity on me and offered me a job in the tapes feed room. The majority of my 20+ years in broadcasting are aligned with NBC." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2fMqeo2>

--Jonathan Darche, executive director of the NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board -- **how he thinks the Trump Presidency is going:** "I worry that our institutions are not strong enough to withstand the stresses the administration is placing on the rule of law and that last century's progress towards a more just society are being reversed." **Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2gdDxOK>

BIRTHDAYS: Catherine Hicks, White House press aide, is 24 (hat tip: Matt Nussbaum) ... Alexandra Pelosi ... Mandy Grunwald (h/t Jon Haber) ... Michael Morrell ... Mark Paoletta, chief counsel for Vice President Pence, is 55 ... Teresa Heinz Kerry ... Jon Banner, EVP at PepsiCo and an ABC News alum, is 5-0 ... Samsung's Megan Pollock (h/ts Jack Smith and Meredith McPhillips) ... Dr. James Hamblin, senior editor at The

Atlantic, is 35 ... Carolyn Weyforth Glanville ... Bob Geldof ... Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) is 74 ... former Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-Mont.) is 62 ... Sloane Potter, a POLITICO alum who is director of strategic partnerships at Techweek ... Amanda Harris ... Josh Althouse, conservative outreach director for Speaker Ryan ... Taylor Frechette ... Peter Schottenfels, press secretary at Airbnb and an OFA alum ... Jim Demers, NH state chair for Clinton 2016 and Obama 2008 (h/t Erik Smith) ... Karina Petersen, comms director for Sen. Murkowski (R-Alaska) ... Brayden McCarthy of fintech start-up Fundera, celebrating in Paris this weekend with boyfriend Joshua Rogers (h/t Alex Levy) ... Banks Woodruff, director at In Pursuit Of (h/t James Davis) ... Matt Parker, Bush 43 WH alum ...

... **Elisabeth Leoni**, managing editor of Google's The Keyword blog ... AEI's Joseph Kosten ... Emily Gribble ... Alison Young ... AP's David Klepper ... Caitlin Offinger of BerlinRosen ... Andrea Samuelsen ... Lainie Ori ... Jill Giuliani Kennedy ... Fabien Levy ... CBS News' Whitney Bright ... Kevin Hall, Sen. Warner's comms. director ... Erick M. Sanchez, senior advisor at Frontier Solutions ... John Boccieri ... Mike Petruzzello, managing director at Qorvis (h/t Kevin Chaffee) ... Chris Michel ... Ashton Theodore Randle of GovPredict ... Will Keesee ... Julie Copeland, executive director at Emerge Virginia ... Blanche Bettina Cosio ... John Herzog ... Hasib Alikozai ... Michael Tardif ... John Jasik, judicial liaison at State ... Doug Bailey ... Peggy Suntum ... Jess Vilsack ... Jim Cavanaugh (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Koch Industries:** At Koch, we work to create more value, using fewer resources than the day before. With more than 300 manufacturing sites across the United States, we're one of America's largest manufacturers. To stay in business for the long term, we constantly need to improve and innovate- both in the products we make and how we make them. In 2015, 92 percent of our production-related waste from reporting facilities was recycled, recovered for energy or treated. Overall, Koch has had a 33 percent reduction in waste produced since 2012. Creating innovations while saving resources? Challenge Accepted. *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Energy
Sent: Wed 12/20/2017 3:04:06 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Energy, presented by the Renewable Fuels Association: Republicans ready to celebrate ANWR opening — Interior paid back for Zinke's Virgin Islands fundraiser — Collins expresses unease over White's nomination

By Anthony Adragna | 12/20/2017 10:00 AM EDT

PROGRAMMING NOTE: *Morning Energy* will not publish from Dec. 25-Jan. 1. Our next *Morning Energy* newsletter will publish on Tues. Jan. 2. Please continue to follow Pro Energy issues [here](#).

ON THE PRECIPICE: House lawmakers have to vote again this morning after procedural snafus in the Senate, but the Republican tax package H.R. 1 (115) now on a glide path to passage will realize the GOP's long-held objective of opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil and gas drilling. "It's a very special day," Senate Energy Chairman Lisa Murkowski told reporters before the vote. What seemed like a pipe dream just months ago turned into reality despite the vehement objections of Democrats and environmental groups. As written, the legislation calls for Interior to hold two lease sales for drilling in ANWR over the next decade and is estimated to raise \$1 billion over that period (though critics say those estimates are unrealistically rosy). The final tax package spares the solar and wind industries from provisions in earlier iterations they worried would cripple their sectors (reminder on those provisions [here](#)).

For the record: Six of the 12 House Republicans who signed a letter opposing ANWR drilling - Carlos Curbelo, Dave Reichert, Ryan Costello, Brian Fitzpatrick, Pat Meehan and Mark Sanford - voted in favor of the tax bill on Tuesday. In addition, 24 of the 31 GOP members of the Climate Solutions Caucus backed the package. That prompted Climate Hawks Vote to call for the group's dissolution: "With today's vote, the Climate Solutions Caucus has demonstrated its nihilism. The Democratic members of the caucus are only providing political cover for consistent Republican votes for climate destruction," RL Miller, the group's president, said in a statement.

Spotted: Murkowski sporting "Incredible Hulk" earrings and a scarf ahead of the final tax vote in tribute to the late-Sen. Ted Stevens, who spent decades trying to open ANWR to oil and gas drilling (and famously wore a "Hulk" tie ahead of tough policy battles). "I can't ever think about the ANWR debate without thinking about Ted," she told reporters, adding she met with her father, former Sen. Frank Murkowski, and Rep. Don Young to celebrate the impending victory in the decades-long fight. Picture via E&E's Geof Koss [here](#).

ANWR opponents aren't giving up: Environmental groups and lawmakers, including Sen. Ed Markey, will "discuss what comes next" in the drilling fight during a press call this morning at 11 a.m. And top Senate Energy Democrat Maria Cantwell took to the floor to note that "[w]e didn't create the Arctic coastal plain, but I can tell you this- we cannot re-create it. What we're doing today is taking a step towards destroying it."

Bashed: Majority Whip John Cornyn slammed a report he personally inserted a provision to give deductions to investors in master limited partnerships that are widely used in the oil and gas

business and specific lawmakers as "more fake news."

WHERE WE STAND ON THE CR: Amid opposition within their own ranks, House Republicans are changing strategy again and plan to extend funding until Jan. 19 for the whole government, POLITICO's John Bresnahan and Rachael Bade report. A \$81 billion disaster relief package, which faces surprisingly strong opposition, will get its own separate vote.

Meanwhile, The Senate is poised to load up its stopgap spending package with a host of goodies, including tens of billions in disaster relief spending, Cornyn told reporters Tuesday. But as Pro Budget & Appropriations Brief's Sarah Ferris reports, some House members say they will draw a hard line against potential Senate add-ons. "If they expect we're going to automatically accept it, that's about as smart as us thinking they're going to automatically accept what we send over," Tom Cole said.

Cornyn seemed pretty favorable to the House's \$81 billion disaster relief package, though he suggested changes were possible. "The amount is pretty generous but the need is tremendous - and it ranges all across the country from the wildfires out west to the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Florida, Texas and Louisiana," he said. "So we'll take a look at it and see whether it reflects the Senate's priorities but we ought to be able to work certainly within that number."

How long will we be here? That depends on who you ask. "We're prepared to be here as long as it takes," Cornyn said. Others bet on a quicker fold. "I actually believe that we'll send the Senate our thing, they'll adjust it, and ping it back to us, and we'll pass it," House appropriator Mike Simpson said.

WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and NEI's Jonathan Rund correctly named nine House members as being 80 or older. For today: Minnesota is slated to have both senators up for election in 2018 with Sen. Al Franken's forthcoming resignation. When was the last time a state had both seats up in the same year? (Hint: It's not as unusual as you might think.) Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

SMALL PAYMENT, BIG IMPLICATIONS: Interior got back \$275 from the Virgin Islands Republican Party for an appearance Secretary Ryan Zinke made last spring at a fundraiser, a small payback with big legal weight, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports. That's because the payment may shield Zinke from accusations that his appearance at the event where donors paid as much as \$5,000 per couple violated the Hatch Act, which prohibits government officials from using taxpayer resources to advance partisan causes. "The invoice was calculated to cover the political activities portion of the Secretary's travel to the USVI in accordance with Hatch Act regulations," spokeswoman Heather Swift said. "There is a formula used to determine what percentage of a given trip the political event makes up, and how much to reimburse."

But questions remain: The Virgin Islands Republican Party hasn't listed donations in its March and April FEC reports matching the amounts solicited for the fundraiser or from people on the guest list, making it impossible to know who shelled out big bucks for a picture with a Trump administration Cabinet official. The Caribbean fundraiser, which occurred during a three-day

official trip by Zinke to the island chain, is his only political event so far for which FEC filings show the Interior Department as having received reimbursement. Zinke has appeared at more than a dozen events with former campaign donors or conservative activists while traveling on official business, including at least four fundraisers for politicians or PACs, only two of which Interior says required reimbursements. But still, "they may be in technical compliance with the law, but from appearance's perspective there could be abuse," Virginia Canter of the group Citizens for Ethics and Responsibility in Washington told Ben.

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** This week marks the tenth anniversary of the Renewable Fuel Standard, helping to provide consumer choice at the pump. The RFS has been an unmitigated success, helping to clean the air, lower gasoline prices, provide greater energy security and boost local economies. Learn more at <http://www.ethanolrfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RFS2-Ten-Years.pdf>. **

ON THE CLOCK: EPA has until Jan. 12 to give a federal appeals court a timeline "with precision and specificity" for when it will issue a final rule identifying remaining parts of the U.S. that meet its tightened 2015 ozone standard, according to a Tuesday order. Democratic attorneys general, as well as environmental and public health groups, have sued the agency for not meeting a statutory deadline to identify whether many of the urban and downwind regions in the country meet the standard.

SEEMS LIKE A BIG DEAL: New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo backed a push Tuesday to divest the state's \$200 billion pension fund from all fossil fuel investments, POLITICO New York's Marie J. French reports. He suggested no timeline for the divestment from fossil fuel companies but also called for the fund to stop any new investments in businesses with "significant fossil fuel-related activities." But state Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, a long-time divestment opponent, did not support the move in a statement even as he vowed the fund would increase its low-carbon emission index fund investments.

LAWMAKERS PRESS TRUMP FOR 'STRONG' SOLAR REMEDY: About a dozen members of Congress are calling on President Donald Trump to take "strong and effective" action to protect the U.S. solar industry against foreign competition that they said could undermine U.S. energy independence. "In order to ensure electrical grid security, the U.S. cannot afford to become dependent on imports from China and other countries for cutting-edge [crystalline photovoltaic] solar cell and module technology," Sens. Ron Wyden, Jeff Merkley and Sherrod Brown said in a letter to Trump. Eight House lawmakers sent a nearly identical letter making the same argument.

Trump faces a decision by the end of January on whether to restrict imports of solar cells and modules from around the world to give the U.S. industry time to become more competitive. The U.S. International Trade Commission has already recommended relief in an "emergency safeguard" case brought by Georgia-based Suniva and Oregon-based SolarWorld, but it is up to Trump to decide what, if any, action to take. "We urge you to impose a strong and effective remedy that will ensure a growing and competitive U.S. CSPV solar cell and module manufacturing industry and promote robust growth across our entire domestic solar industry," the lawmakers wrote.

FILL EM' UP? Murkowski said she's disappointed the Trump administration has yet to fill a host of "pretty high-profile" positions throughout the administration, such as leaders for the Fish & Wildlife Service, BLM and National Park Service. "We need to have these positions filled," she said, adding there are efforts afoot to clear some slots under the Energy Committee's jurisdiction via consent before the end of the year.

That Strange situation: There hasn't been any word about who will fill the slot of outgoing Alabama Sen. Luther Strange on the energy panel, Murkowski said, adding she expected Republican leadership would figure that out over the holiday break.

PROBE SOUGHT IN NOW-AXED CONTRACT: The Environmental Defense Fund asked EPA's inspector general to look into the agency's now-canceled contract with Definers Public Affairs for media monitoring services. "Although EPA reportedly intends to terminate its contract with Definers in light of widespread concern, a full investigation is essential to determine whether EPA's multifaceted interactions with Definers and its affiliates has led to improper uses of agency resources," the group wrote. Link [here](#).

TRY AGAIN: Top Senate EPW Democrat [Tom Carper](#) said Tuesday he'll force the administration to resubmit the nomination of Kathleen Hartnett White to run the Council on Environmental Quality next year, your ME host [reports](#). "Unqualified or controversial nominees will not simply be rubber-stamped by the Senate," he said in a statement. Senators typically allow nominees not confirmed by the end of the first year of a congressional term to remain pending without forcing them to be renominated.

First Republican expresses unease: Maine Republican Sen. [Susan Collins](#) told ME she'd viewed a clip White's confirmation hearing that "raised a lot of issues in my mind" but said she's not examined her record in-depth.

WON'T PAY FOR THIS: The Georgia Public Service Commission released a proposed order Tuesday that would prevent nearly \$500 million in costs from Georgia Power's Vogtle nuclear project from being passed on to consumers, Pro's Darius Dixon [reports](#). "Basic fairness dictates that ratepayers should not have to pay for those excessive costs of the Project over which [Georgia Power] had some level of control," the proposed order reads. The commission is expected to vote on the order Thursday morning.

HEARING WATCH: A Senate EPW subcommittee looks at freight transportation today at 10 a.m. ME expects Monday's fatal accident in Washington state could dominate the discussion, but would also be on the lookout for discussion of the Trump administration's push to roll back Obama-era safety regulations for trains carrying crude oil. Watch [here](#).

THANKS, NO THANKS: Citing "little hope you are working in good faith," the head of Patagonia pointedly declined the House Natural Resources Committee invitation to testify before the panel in a [letter](#) Tuesday. "I find it disingenuous that after unethically using taxpayers' resources to call us liars, you would ask me to testify in front of a committee for a matter already decided by the administration," founder Yvon Chouinard wrote. "It is clear the House Committee

on Natural Resources, like many committees in this failed Orwellian government, is shackled to special interests of oil, gas and mining."

MAIL CALL! HERE'S SOME IDEAS ON PERMITTING: The National Association of Clean Air Agencies sent a letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on Tuesday offering "principles and recommendations" for the agency to consider as it mulls tweaks to its Clean Air Act permitting programs. Read it [here](#).

NOT LOOKING GOOD: Three freshmen House Democrats said Tuesday they doubted the administration would make a host of changes to NAFTA, including significantly strengthening environmental provisions, to secure their support, Pro Trade's Doug Palmer [reports](#). "I'm not seeing a lot of hope," Rep. [Pramila Jayapal](#) said at a press conference on Capitol Hill with Reps. [Jamie Raskin](#) and [Ro Khanna](#).

ICYMI: The White House suffered an embarrassing defeat as former Rep. Scott Garrett's selection to run the Export-Import Bank went down 10-13 in the Senate Banking Committee on Tuesday, Pro Financial Services' Zachary Warmbrodt [reports](#). It also stings for Vice President Mike Pence, who worked for months to boost the nomination despite doubts from some administration officials, POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia and Zachary [report](#).

QUICK HITS

- France to ban all oil, gas production by 2040. [CBS News](#).
- Judge rules state can't enforce Inslee order to cut greenhouse-gas emissions. [Seattle Times](#).
- Shutdown Starts for Coal-Fired Plant Serving US Southwest. [AP](#).
- E.P.A. Delays Bans on Uses of Hazardous Chemicals. [New York Times](#).
- Oil Gains as Pipeline Outage Continues. [Wall Street Journal](#).

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** The Renewable Fuel Standard, **helping to boost the U.S. economy**, was signed into law ten years ago this week. According to a recent analysis in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, the RFS boosted the value of the U.S. agricultural sector by \$14.1 billion in 2015, or nearly \$6,800 per American farm. Thanks to the RFS, corn prices averaged \$3.58 per bushel in 2015; without the program, corn prices would have averaged just \$2.75 per bushel, far below the cost of production.. Last year, the production of 15.3 billion gallons of ethanol supported more than 339,000 direct and indirect jobs across all sectors of the economy. Learn more at <http://www.ethanolrfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RFS2-Ten-Years.pdf>. #thankyouRFS **

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2017/12/20/republicans-ready-to->

celebrate-anwr-opening-058030

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To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 3:19:04 PM
Subject: FW: Mother Jones (12-15) The EPA Hired a Major Republican Opposition Research Firm to Track Press Activity

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: D'Andrea, Michael
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:17 AM
To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Mother Jones (12-15) The EPA Hired a Major Republican Opposition Research Firm to Track Press Activity

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Seneca, Roy" <Seneca.Roy@epa.gov>
Date: December 15, 2017 at 10:07:08 AM EST
To: "D'Andrea, Michael" <DANDREA.MICHAEL@EPA.GOV>, "White, Terri-A" <White.Terri-A@epa.gov>, "schafer, joan" <schafer.joan@epa.gov>, "Sternberg, David" <Sternberg.David@epa.gov>, "Wzorek, Katherine" <wzorek.katherine@epa.gov>, "Smith, Bonnie" <smith.bonnie@epa.gov>, "Smith, William (Region 3)" <smith.william@epa.gov>, "McIlwain, Jaclyn" <Mcilwain.Jaclyn@epa.gov>, "Miles, Amanda" <miles.amanda@epa.gov>, "Hamilton, Brian" <Hamilton.Brian@epa.gov>, "Zieba, Kyle" <Zieba.Kyle@epa.gov>, "Brown, Kinshasa" <Brown.Kinshasa@epa.gov>, "Ferrell, Mark" <Ferrell.Mark@epa.gov>
Subject: Mother Jones (12-15) The EPA Hired a Major Republican Opposition

Research Firm to Track Press Activity

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/12/the-epa-hired-a-major-republican-opposition-research-firm-to-track-press-activity/#>

The EPA Hired a Major Republican Opposition Research Firm to Track Press Activity

It promises “war room” style media monitoring.

Rebecca Leber, Andy Kroll and Russ Choma Dec. 15, 2017 6:00 AM

Using taxpayer dollars, the Environmental Protection Agency has hired a cutting-edge Republican PR firm that specializes in digging up opposition research to help Administrator Scott Pruitt’s office track and shape press coverage of the agency.

According to federal contracting records, earlier this month Pruitt’s office inked a no-bid \$120,000 contract with Definers Corp., a Virginia-based public relations firm founded by Matt Rhoades, who managed Mitt Romney’s 2012 presidential campaign. Following Romney’s defeat, Rhoades established America Rising, an ostensibly independent political action committee that works closely with the Republican National Committee and Republican candidates to mine damning information on opponents. Other higher-ups at Definers include former RNC research director Joe Pounder, who’s been described as “a master of opposition research,” and senior vice president Colin Reed, an oppo-research guru billed as “among the leaders of the war on [Sen. Elizabeth] Warren.”

This for-profit consulting firm offers a variety of public relations services such as digital strategy, political consulting, and media relations. According to its website, Definers’ clients include Fortune 500 corporations, political groups, and nonprofits. In the past, both Marco Rubio and John McCain used their services, and since the 2016 election so has Rep. Diane Black (R-Tenn.). The client list for America Rising includes the RNC, Republican candidates, such as Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Penn.), and super-PACs such as the Mitch McConnell-linked Senate Leadership Fund and Karl Rove’s American Crossroads.

The company also specializes in using the press and social media to “validate your narrative.” According to the company’s website, one of the tools to help do this is its “Definers Console” media-tracking technology. Reed said his firm contracted with Pruitt’s office at the EPA, which is the first governmental client to pay for the Definers Console.

The technology promises “war room” style media monitoring, analysis and advice, according to marketing materials. A brochure for the Console assures users that they will be able to “monitor for potential crises, as well as to track their message dissemination, relevant responses to their messaging, and what competitors’ actions have been.”

Besides monitoring media, users will get analysis and input from their employees whose experience in political campaigns and the business world helps create a unique approach “to intelligence gathering and opposition work. This experience informs the way we gather, synthesize, and disseminate information.”

“Definers has been contracted to provide media monitoring services through our Console by the EPA,” Reed says. “We provide the same service to a number of corporate and non-profit organizations.”

In response to *Mother Jones*’ questions about the Definers contract, EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham said, “The Definers contract is for media monitoring/newsclip compilation.” To a question on how the contract came about, she said: “The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management.”

USASpending.gov, a website that tracks federal spending, shows that in early 2016 the EPA signed a \$207,000 [contract](#) with a firm called Bulletin Intelligence, requesting similar services. Bulletin is owned by public relations giant Cision, a well-known international PR firm. According to OpenSecrets.org’s expenditure data, Bulletin is not political and has not done any recent work for any candidates or PACs. The contract expired in February.

Definers also recently launched a new venture with the global law firm Dentons, which describes itself as combining “political intelligence, legal advisors, campaign-style tactics, lobbying, governmental affairs, research, and communications into one unique offering” to help clients.

The career of at least one of Pruitt’s staffers has overlapped with the Republican operatives at Definers. Jahan Wilcox, who previously worked for Marco Rubio’s presidential campaign and in rapid response for the Republican National Committee, is now a spokesperson for the EPA.

Wilcox, along with other political staff in Pruitt’s EPA press shop, has had some contentious interactions with the press. In one case, when Eric Lipton from [*The New York Times*](#) was confirming facts for an investigation into the EPA’s industry-friendly approach to chemical regulation, EPA spokesperson Liz Bowman diverted the discussion to other outlets’ reporting rather than confirming his questions. Wilcox [added](#), “If you want to steal work from other outlets and pretend like it’s your own reporting that is your decision.”

On another occasion, shortly after the *Associated Press* [reported](#) on the Superfund sites affected by Hurricane Harvey, the EPA [went after](#) one of the bylined reporters in a statement, and an unnamed official later [admitted](#) to removing one of the bylined

AP reporters from the agency's press list, saying, "We don't think he's a trustworthy reporter." When Pruitt has faced criticism, the EPA highlights friendlier stories from conservative outlets—including *Breitbart*.

Pruitt has come under fire for a general lack of transparency at the EPA. The latest example is his trip promoting natural gas in Morocco. The public learned of his travels when his office posted a media release, causing confusion over why the EPA would not notify reporters ahead of time. This means that information on Pruitt's activities in Morocco will be restricted to the EPA's own spin.

The EPA's work with groups affiliated with Pounder predate this contract. On a handful of occasions, the EPA has promoted positive coverage of Pruitt's actions from the news-aggregation website Need To Know Network. Earlier this year, the website wrote a series of stories designed shed positive light on the controversial administrator. In one story, the site describes Pruitt as "busy racking up accomplishments that both protect Americans and save millions in taxpayer dollars." Another congratulated Pruitt for moving ahead with plans to open Alaska's Bristol Bay to mining, writing it was "a move that will prove to be a massive job creator for President Trump and Pruitt."

The Need to Know Network was started by Pounder and other operatives connected to America Rising and Definers Corp.

To: Pace, Julie[JPace@ap.org]; Biesecker, Michael[MBiesecker@ap.org]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 5:28:53 PM
Subject: Julie and Michael -

Below are our on-the-record responses in bold that you can attribute to me.

From: Biesecker, Michael [mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 11:47 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Bug sweeping, biometric locks

Liz, Jahan,

AP will be publishing a story about \$3,000 in taxpayer funds expended in April for a contractor to sweep Administrator Pruitt's office for electronic listening devices. We will also be reporting on spending to install biometric locks in his suite.

When coupled with the previously reported purchase of the privacy booth, it raises questions about why Pruitt feels the need to invest in courter-surveillance measures that none of his predecessors felt were necessary. EPA headquarters is a secure building with armed security and metal detectors at the entrances. Pruitt also has his personal security detail. Is the administrator concerned about the potential for electronic spying against him by the agency's own employees?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA’s Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

As part of the same story, we will also be mentioning the \$120,000 Definers contract and the FOIAs filed by America Rising targeted at EPA employees viewed as potentially disloyal to the Trump administration. Please provide any comment you have on those issues.

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael

AP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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“I go with Custer and will be at the death.” – AP reporter Mark Kellogg’s final dispatch from the Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1876

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 1/4/2018 6:10:56 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by Better Medicare Alliance: TRUMP threatens WOLFF with lawsuit -- SESSIONS' bad day: MEADOWS and JORDAN call on him to resign while GARDNER slams his pot decision -- DoJ looking at CLINTON'S EMAILS again

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by Better Medicare Alliance

Good Thursday afternoon. GOP RETAINS CONTROL OF VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES AFTER RANDOM DRAW -- Kevin Robillard: "The state elections board chairman pulled a film canister out of a ceramic bowl containing the name of Republican David Yancey, giving him the victory over Democrat Shelly Simonds. Each received 11,608 votes in the race for a Newport News-based seat in the Virginia legislature's lower chamber. Yancey's victory will give the GOP a 51-49 advantage in the House of Delegates." <http://politi.co/2CqqXF8>

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST ... MISSISSIPPI REP. GREGG HARPER TO RETIRE -- @samrhall: "BREAKING: A source close to U.S. Rep. Gregg Harper confirmed the #MS03 congressman will not seek re-election for a sixth term. Official announcement expected this afternoon."

THE NEXT TURN OF THE SCREW IN TRUMP V. BANNON -- "Trump lawyer sends 'cease and desist' letter to 'Fire and Fury' author, publisher," by Cristiano Lima: "A legal representative for President Donald Trump on Thursday called for the author and publisher of a forthcoming book on the White House to 'immediately cease and desist' from releasing it, alleging it contains libelous and defamatory information.

"In a letter addressed to Michael Wolff and Steve Rubin, the writer and the president of the book's publisher, Henry Holt and Co., lawyer Charles Harder said his team was 'investigating numerous false and/or baseless statement' made about the president in the upcoming book, 'Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House.' Harder wrote that publishing the book would be tantamount to 'defamation by libel' and called on Rubin and Wolff to halt distribution of the book, which is set to be released next Tuesday.

"Mr. Trump hereby demands that you immediately cease and desist from any further publication, release or dissemination of the Book,' Harder wrote. Representatives for Wolff and Henry Holt and Co. did not immediately respond for comment."

<http://politi.co/2Cqn8zA> ... **The full letter** <http://politi.co/2CqOqpD>

LET'S BE CLEAR -- Trump's scorched earth strategy against Steve Bannon and the decision to send cease and desist letters to Bannon along with Wolff and his publisher is not about finding victory in the court of law and stopping this book from being sold. If anything, it is serving as a boon to Wolff and his book sales. Right now, his book is No.

1 on Amazon's bestseller list. **REMEMBER:** Trump has long threatened people with lawsuits that ultimately fizzled out. Remember when Trump said he was going to sue The New York Times and "open up" libel laws to sue other media organizations?

TRUMP TO REPORTERS TODAY, when asked about Bannon in Roosevelt Room, per pooler David Smith of The Guardian: "He called me a great man last night so, you know, he obviously changed his tune pretty quick. ... I don't talk to him. That's just a misnomer."

THE PRESIDENT'S DEFENDERS -- CHRIS RUDDY on Newsmax:

<http://nws.mx/2CELNUM>

A CLASSIC TRUMP PIVOT -- WHAT HE'D RATHER TALK ABOUT --

@realDonaldTrump at 6:32 a.m.: "With all of the failed 'experts' weighing in, does anybody really believe that talks and dialogue would be going on between North and South Korea right now if I wasn't firm, strong and willing to commit our total 'might' against the North. Fools, but talks are a good thing!" ... **at 6:37 a.m.**, quote-tweeting a picture of a family at a military ceremony with the caption "this is why we stand": "So beautiful....Show this picture to the NFL players who still kneel!"

HOW WOLFF WROTE THE BOOK -- "'You Can't Make This S--- Up': My Year Inside Trump's Insane White House," in The Hollywood Reporter: "After the election, I proposed to him that I come to the White House and report an inside story for later publication -- journalistically, as a fly on the wall -- which he seemed to misconstrue as a request for a job. No, I said. I'd like to just watch and write a book. 'A book?' he responded, losing interest. 'I hear a lot of people want to write books,' he added, clearly not understanding why anybody would. 'Do you know Ed Klein?'-- author of several virulently anti-Hillary books. 'Great guy. I think he should write a book about me.' But sure, Trump seemed to say, knock yourself out.

"Since the new White House was often uncertain about what the president meant or did not mean in any given utterance, his non-disapproval became a kind of passport for me to hang around -- checking in each week at the Hay-Adams hotel, making appointments with various senior staffers who put my name in the 'system,' and then wandering across the street to the White House and plunking myself down, day after day, on a West Wing couch. ...

"Politics is a game, of course, of determined role-playing, but the difficulties of staying in character in the Trump White House became evident almost from the first day. 'You can't make this s*** up,' Sean Spicer, soon to be portrayed as the most hapless man in America, muttered to himself after his tortured press briefing on the first day of the new administration, when he was called to justify the president's inaugural crowd numbers - and soon enough, he adopted this as a personal mantra." ***Plus more details on the White House power struggle, how the staff feels about Trump and Sean Hannity providing questions ahead of time to the White House***

<http://bit.ly/2IVcdqX>

-- **MORE FROM WOLFF IN GQ UK** on Bannon, Roger Ailes, Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity plotting a new conservative media empire, Trump's decision to skip the White House Correspondents' Dinner, his relationship with Kellyanne Conway, Hope Hicks and other women and more. ***Plus the detail that Tucker Carlson was offered press secretary*** <http://bit.ly/2CSVjkz>

-- **Axios' Mike Allen:** "Michael Wolff has tapes to back up quotes in his incendiary book -- dozens of hours of them. Among the sources he taped, I'm told, are Bannon and former White House deputy chief of staff Katie Walsh." <http://bit.ly/2CnouLA>

DRILL, BABY, DRILL -- "Trump administration to push for oil drilling off Pacific, Atlantic, Florida coasts," by Ben Lefebvre: "The Trump administration is expected to announce Thursday that it will propose opening up nearly all federal waters for oil and gas drilling, giving the energy industry access to fields in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans and the eastern Gulf of Mexico that have been off limits for decades, according to two sources familiar with the plan. The expansion is likely to trigger huge political backlash, particularly on the West Coast and in Florida, where offshore drilling has generated sharp opposition from residents, environmental groups and businesses who fear a spill like BP's in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 could devastate beaches and destroy the tourist industry that is vital to the regional economies." <http://politi.co/2Co1OLf>

GOOD SIGN FOR GOVERNMENT FUNDING -- @seungminkim: "Big Four meeting must've been actually somewhat productive. McConnell today on floor: 'I'm optimistic we can begin 2018 with a bipartisan two-year funding agreement that meets several critically important objectives.'"

ABOUT THOSE EMAILS -- THE DAILY BEAST'S BETSY WOODRUFF -- "Justice Department 'Looking Into' Hillary Clinton's Emails -- Again": "Justice Department officials are taking a fresh look at Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state, The Daily Beast has learned.

"An ally of Attorney General Jeff Sessions who is familiar with the thinking at the Justice Department's Washington headquarters described it as an effort to gather new details on how Clinton and her aides handled classified material. Officials' questions include how much classified information was sent over Clinton's server; who put that information into an unclassified environment, and how; and which investigators knew about these matters and when. The Sessions ally also said officials have questions about immunity agreements that Clinton aides may have made."
<http://thebea.st/2CRyGxa>

***** **A message from Better Medicare Alliance: HEALTH CARE POLICY ALERT:**
We can all agree that high need, high cost patients deserve the best care. And with Medicare Advantage, seniors and people with disabilities are getting the high-value care they need through flexible benefits and specialized care. Learn more:
<http://bettermedicarealliance.org> *****

PAGING CALIFORNIA -- "U.S. to end policy that let legal pot flourish," by the AP's Sadie Gurman: "Attorney General Jeff Sessions is rescinding the Obama-era policy that had paved the way for legalized marijuana to flourish in states across the country, two people with knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press. Sessions will instead let federal prosecutors where pot is legal decide how aggressively to enforce federal marijuana law, the people said." <http://bit.ly/2CS5uGh>

-- **@SenCoryGardner:** ".@realDonaldTrump had it right. This must be left up to the states. ... This reported action directly contradicts what Attorney General Sessions told me prior to his confirmation. With no prior notice to Congress, the Justice Department has trampled on the will of the voters in CO and other states. ... I am prepared to take all steps necessary, including holding DOJ nominees, until the Attorney General lives up to the commitment he made to me prior to his confirmation." ... **@LisaMurkowski:** "Today's announcement is disruptive to state regulatory regimes and regrettable." **Full statement** <http://bit.ly/2IVMgXV>

SIREN -- Op-ed from REPS. MARK MEADOWS (R-N.C.) and JIM JORDAN (R-OHIO) in the Washington Examiner: **"It's time for Jeff Sessions to go, as shown by the latest FBI leak":** "Attorney General Jeff Sessions has recused himself from the Russia investigation, but it would appear he has no control at all of the premier law enforcement agency in the world. It is time for Sessions to start managing in a spirit of transparency to bring all of this improper behavior to light and stop further violations. If Sessions can't address this issue immediately, then we have one final question needing an answer: When is it time for a new attorney general? Sadly, it seems the answer is now." <http://washex.am/2CS6WbC>

HEADLINES THE PRESIDENT WILL LIKE -- Reuters: "U.S. private sector adds 250,000 jobs in December, biggest rise since March": "U.S. private employers added 250,000 jobs in December, marking the biggest monthly increase since March, a report by ADP Research Institute showed on Thursday. Economists surveyed by Reuters had forecast the ADP National Employment Report would show a gain of 190,000 jobs, with estimates ranging from 165,000 to 225,000." <http://reut.rs/2CSCazm>

-- **"The Dow Jones industrial average tops 25,000 for first time, continuing its history-making rise,"** by WaPo's Renae Merle <http://wapo.st/2CS3H3W>

WHERE'S EVERYONE GOING? -- ISAAC DOVERE talks to lawmakers who are leaving Congress, with portraits by **BEN BAKER** in POLITICO Magazine <http://politi.co/2CnDtVL>

ON THE WORLD STAGE -- "Trump, South Korea's Moon agree to suspend military drills during Olympics," by CNN's Angela Dewan <http://cnn.it/2CRbZJj>

-- **"When a North Korean Missile Accidentally Hit a North Korean City,"** by The Diplomat's Ankit Panda and Dave Schmerler: "What happens when a North Korean

ballistic missile test fails in flight and explodes in a populated area? On April 28, 2017, North Korea launched a single Hwasong-12/KN17 intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) from Pukchang Airfield in South Pyongan Province (the Korean People's Army's Air and Anti-Air Force Unit 447 in Ryongak-dong, Sunchon City, to be more precise). That missile failed shortly after launch and crashed in the Chongsin-dong, in North Korean city of Tokchon, causing considerable damage to a complex of industrial or agricultural buildings." <http://bit.ly/2CSBA4L>

--**DAVID CARDEN**, former U.S. ambassador to ASEAN, in POLITICO Magazine, "**Why we need a new approach to North Korea**: It's time to stop focusing narrowly on a nuclear deal, and expand to address its broader problems": "The deep levels of distrust and enmity on both sides make it impossible to imagine reaching an agreement under the 'binary' conditions that currently exist, especially one that excludes most other global stakeholders. An expanded definition focused on development would put North Korea on a path to global engagement and prosperity, creating an alternative to the insular 'world of one' it now inhabits. Properly constructed, such a plan could also provide North Korea's leadership a high degree of security that regime change is not an international goal." <http://politi.co/2CGp4rr>

AFTERNOON READ -- "The Real Future of Work: Forget automation. The workplace is already cracking up in profound ways, and Washington is sorely behind on dealing with it," by Danny Vinik in POLITICO Magazine: "Over the past two decades, the U.S. labor market has undergone a quiet transformation, as companies increasingly forgo full-time employees and fill positions with independent contractors, on-call workers or temps -- what economists have called 'alternative work arrangements' or the 'contingent workforce.' Most Americans still work in traditional jobs, but these new arrangements are growing -- and the pace appears to be picking up. From 2005 to 2015, according to the best available estimate, the number of people in alternative work arrangements grew by 9 million and now represents roughly 16 percent of all U.S. workers, while the number of traditional employees declined by 400,000. A perhaps more striking way to put it is that during those 10 years, all net job growth in the American economy has been in contingent jobs.

"**Around Washington, politicians often talk** about this shift in terms of the so-called gig economy. But those startling numbers have little to do with the rise of Uber, TaskRabbit and other 'disruptive' new-economy startups. Such firms actually make up a small share of the contingent workforce. The shift ... is part of something much deeper and longer, touching everything from janitors and housekeepers to lawyers and professors." <http://politi.co/2CT34al>

MEDIAWATCH -- Thomas Ricks, the Pulitzer Prize-winning military reporter and author, is joining Task & Purpose as a senior columnist.

-- **HOT MEDIA JOBS**: **WSJ** is hiring a Moscow bureau chief (<http://bit.ly/2CS7YVa>), **Yahoo News** is hiring a senior national affairs reporter (<http://bit.ly/2CsduMQ>) and **BuzzFeed News** is hiring a political reporter to cover Democrats (<http://bzfd.it/2Cs9dt3>).

SPORTS BLINK -- "Who Needs Trade Talks? These Days, General Managers Just Use Emojis," by NYT's James Wagner: "This is the 24/7 life of a modern baseball executive, who operates in a world where analytics have already altered the way rosters are constructed and in-game strategies are carried out. Technology has also altered how the sport's decision-makers with one another -- in humorous, contemporary ways. The haggling over the phone, or even in person, still goes on, of course, but is now being supplanted in part by more and more text messages, emojis and GIFs. Yes, even GIFs." <http://nyti.ms/2CRGUoF>

SPOTTED: Rep. George Holding (R-N.C.) in business class flying from RDU to Heathrow on Monday where he watched 'House of Cards' the entire six hour flight, per our source. ... **Rep. Warren Davidson (R-Ohio)**, a member of the Freedom Caucus, on the 8:35 a.m. American Airlines flight from D.C. to Dayton in the middle of a week off for the House.

TRUMP ALUMNI -- Tory Maguire Sendek has joined the law firm Michael Best as managing director, reporting to Reince Priebus. She was most recently at the White House as a special assistant to the president and director of presidential scheduling.

TRANSITIONS -- Jacek Pruski has joined We The Action as managing director and general counsel and **Katie Waldo** has been named as chief operating officer. Pruski was formerly associate general counsel at the Obama-era Department of Education and Waldo was White House trip manager for the Obama administration. ... **Kate Childs Graham** joined West Wing Writers as a principal. She was previously communications director for Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.). ... **Christian Hertenstein** has joined Definers Public Affairs as vice president. He was previously at Qorvis MSLGROUP.

ENGAGED -- Brittany Bolen, EPA's deputy associate administrator for policy and a Senate EPW alum, got engaged last weekend to **David Dimock**, a Deloitte consultant, on a ski trip in Park City, Utah. The couple met in D.C., and he proposed on a footbridge next to the Town Lift in Park City. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2IXIQVu> ... <http://bit.ly/2E4uY2v> ... <http://bit.ly/2CD8Qip>

--OBAMA ALUMNI -- David Dietz, a social responsibility manager at the NBA and alum of the Obama White House and both Obama campaigns, last weekend proposed to **Anna Field**, a grad student at Northwestern studying mental health counseling. "They met at DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind. David proposed in their new apartment in Chicago and surprised Anna with her family at Quartino after!" **Instapic** <http://bit.ly/2E8vfl8>

***** **A message from Better Medicare Alliance: CONGRESS HAS UNFINISHED BUSINESS TO PROTECT MEDICARE ADVANTAGE SENIORS:** 19 million seniors and people with disabilities choose Medicare Advantage for one reason: it gives them the flexible, affordable, and robust health care they need. And with health needs in this country becoming more complex, it's clear that innovative, integrated solutions are

required.

Better Medicare Alliance urges Congress to act quickly to enhance care for Medicare beneficiaries by approving the CHRONIC Care Act providing enhanced flexibility in supplemental benefit designs for high-cost, high-need beneficiaries and permanently reauthorization of Special Needs Plans (SNPs). And, Congress should vote to delay the Health Insurance Tax (HIT) to protect Medicare Advantage beneficiaries from unaffordable premium hikes.

Enrollment in Medicare Advantage and consumer satisfaction is growing. There is more evidence that Medicare Advantage is improving outcomes and leading efforts to implement innovations in delivery of care. Learn more: <http://bettermedicarealliance.org>

SUBSCRIBE to the Playbook family: **POLITICO Playbook** <http://politi.co/2lQswbh> ... **Playbook Power Briefing** <http://politi.co/2xuOiqh> ... **New York Playbook** <http://politi.co/1ON8bqW> ... **Florida Playbook** <http://politi.co/1OypFe9> ... **New Jersey Playbook** <http://politi.co/1HLKltF> ... **Massachusetts Playbook** <http://politi.co/1Nhtq5v> ... **Illinois Playbook** <http://politi.co/1N7u5sb> ... **California Playbook** <http://politi.co/2bLvcPI> ... **London Playbook** <http://politi.co/2xfDPuK> ... **Brussels Playbook** <http://politi.co/1FZeLcw> ... **All our political and policy tipsheets** <http://politi.co/1M75UbX>

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From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Wed 9/20/2017 6:47:57 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence, presented by the U.S. Chamber's Global Energy Institute: Akin Gump signs seven — Ernst & Young will lobby for Valero, Capitol Hill Strategies for Sanofi

By Theodoric Meyer | 09/20/2017 02:46 PM EDT

With David Beavers

AKIN GUMP SIGNS SEVEN: Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld has added seven clients, the most notable of which might be **Whirlpool** and a new coalition working to influence trade policy. **Justin McCarthy** will lobby for Whirlpool on tax reform, trade policy and NAFTA. (CGCN Group also lobbies for Whirlpool; the firm parted ways with **Peck Madigan Jones** last year.) **Brian Pomper, Josh Teitelbaum, Steve Kho** and McCarthy will lobby for **American Creativity, Technology & Innovation Organizations Network for Trade**, or ACTION for Trade, which describes its mission as ensuring that "U.S. trade policy protects creativity, advances innovation, and prevents foreign countries from stealing intangible assets developed by American workers." Its members include the **Authors Guild**, the **Biotechnology Innovation Organization**, the **International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition**, the **Motion Picture Association of America**, **Oracle**, **PhRMA**, **Qualcomm** and the **Recording Industry Association of America**.

- Akin Gump also signed **CPV Valley LLC**, a power company; the **Large American S-ESOP Coalition**, a coalition of S corporations with employee stock ownership plans; **LG&E and KU Energy**, a gas utility; the **New Venture Fund**, a nonprofit; and **Rotech Healthcare**, a medical equipment firm.

- **Two more notable filings:** Ernst & Young will lobby for **Valero** on tax reform. And **Sanofi** has added **Capitol Hill Strategies** after recently parting ways with **Capitol Counsel**. The pharmaceutical company's other lobbying firms include **American Capitol Group**; **BGR Group**; **Foley Hoag**; **Knight Capitol Consultants**; **Parry, Romani, DeConcini & Symms**; **Ricchetti Incorporated**; **Tarplin Downs & Young**; and **Twenty-First Century Group**.

BRACEWELL ADDS ENERGY LOBBYIST: Bracewell has hired **Anna Burhop** away from the **American Chemistry Council**, where she was a director of regulatory and technical affairs. She'll be a principal at Bracewell, lobbying on energy and environmental issues. Burhop is also a former staffer on the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Tips: tmeyer@politico.com. Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

LOBBYISTS AREN'T EAGER TO DONATE TO LEGAL DEFENSE FUNDS:

"Republican lobbyists say they are wary of contributing to the legal defense funds of Trump administration officials who are under scrutiny in the Russia investigation - even anonymously," **The Hill's Megan Wilson** reports. "Officials in the Trump administration have yet to establish any such accounts, but a federal ethics agency recently gave them the green light, as Politico first reported last week. ... The Hill emailed 30 Republican lobbyists, almost all of them donors to

President **[Donald] Trump** in 2016, to ask whether they would give money to a legal defense fund for someone in the administration; 11 responded. Most asked to remain anonymous."

- "Five lobbyists said that it depends on who in the White House was seeking donations, while five replied with an unequivocal 'no.' 'Anybody who was stupid to run with this crowd can afford their own lawyers. I don't have any sympathy for these folks, and some of them are my friends,' said one advocate." [Full story](#).

FORMER PAUL STAFFER SIGNS POT CLIENT: Liberty Government Affairs, the new firm started by **Brian Darling**, a former aide to Sen. **Rand Paul** (R-Ky.), and **Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough** have signed **Weedmaps**, a startup that does pretty much what its name implies. It's a **Yelp**-like website and app that lets medical marijuana users review local dispensaries, doctors and delivery services. **David Quam**, a lobbyist at Nelson Mullins, said their current focus is on bolstering support for an amendment by Reps. **Dana Rohrabacher** (R-Calif.) and **Earl Blumenauer** (D-Ore.) to block Department of Justice efforts to prosecute individuals who legally use medical marijuana and the states that allow it.

- Though that amendment has been successfully attached as a rider to appropriations bills since 2014, "maintaining the status quo that's been in place is critical to respect state authority," Quam said, especially in light of Attorney General **Jeff Sessions** moving to crack down on legal weed.

EPA NOMINEE IS A FRIEND OF THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY: The New York Times' **Sheila Kaplan** and **Eric Lipton** have a deep-dive on the "scientist nominated to head the federal government's chemical regulatory program," who "has spent much of his career helping businesses fight restrictions on the use of potentially toxic compounds in consumer goods. That record is expected to figure prominently in a [Senate confirmation hearing](#) for the scientist, **Michael L. Dourson**, who critics say is too closely tied to the chemical industry to be its chief regulator. The source of the concern is a consulting group that Mr. Dourson founded in 1995, which has been paid by chemical companies for research and reports that frequently downplayed the health risks posed by their compounds." [Full story](#).

IF YOU MISSED IT: "The Republican National Committee is using a pool of money stockpiled for election recounts and other legal matters to pay for President Trump's ballooning lawyer fees related to the multiple Russia investigations, directing more than \$427,000 so far to lawyers representing him and his eldest son, party officials confirmed Tuesday," **The Washington Post's Matea Gold** reports. "The RNC will report that last month it paid \$100,000 to Trump's personal attorney **John Dowd**, and \$131,250 to **Jay Sekulow**, another member of his legal team, in a Federal Election Commission report set to be filed Wednesday. The party is also covering the mounting legal costs for the president's eldest son, **Donald Trump Jr.**, spending nearly \$200,000 this month on lawyers who helped him prepare for his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee." [Full story](#).

**** A message from the U.S. Chamber's Global Energy Institute:** American energy is changing our economy. And now, it is changing the world. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Global Energy Institute is at the forefront of the policy discussions in Washington and around the nation that will help fuel the global energy revolution. Learn more at

JOBS REPORT:

- **Joel Bailey** has left the **National Restaurant Association**, where he was a lobbyist, to become chief of staff to Rep. **Jimmy Panetta** (D-Calif.).
- **Casey Clark** has joined the **American Gaming Association** as vice president for strategic communications. He previously spent a decade working for **FTI Consulting**.
- **Lance Trover**, who stepped down as Illinois Gov. **Bruce Rauner's** deputy chief of staff this summer, has joined **Brad Tusk's** firm, **Tusk Strategies**, as its first Republican, **Crain's Chicago Business** reports. Trover is also a former aide to former Sen. **Mark Kirk** (R-Ill.) and worked for the **NRSC**.
- **LendUp** has promoted **Jotaka Eaddy** to vice president of policy, strategic engagement and impact. She was previously LendUp's head of government affairs.
- **Sharon West** has joined the **American Clinical Laboratory Association** as vice president of legal and regulatory affairs. She was previously director of economic and regulatory affairs for the **College of American Pathologists**.
- "A former lobbyist who represented clients before the Commodity Futures Trading Commission is joining the agency as a division director," **POLITICO's Patrick Temple-West** reports. "**Matthew Kulkin**, most recently a partner at law firm **Steptoe & Johnson**, has been named director of the division of Swap Dealer and Intermediary Oversight."

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

None

NEW PACs:

Congressional Conservatives (PAC)
Florida Turbine Technologies Political Action Committee (FTT PAC) (PAC)
Homeless Rights and the Law (PAC)
Keep Texas Red (Super PAC)
Shine PAC (PAC)
SOF-ROC Save Our Freedom-Respect Our Constitution (Super PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: CPV Valley LLC
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Large American S-ESOP Coalition
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: LG&E and KU Energy, LLC
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: New Venture Fund

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Rotech Healthcare, Inc.
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: The American Creativity, Technology & Innovation
Organizations Network for Trade
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Whirlpool Corporation
American Defense International, Inc.: Quantum ICT Research Union
Capitol Hill Strategies, LLC: Sanofi US Services Inc.
Ernst & Young LLP (Washington Council Ernst & Young): Valero Energy Corporation
Franklin Square Group, LLC: Opendoor Labs, Inc.
Jennie Aylward: American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Inc
Liberty Government Affairs: WeedMaps
Mercury: Plaquemines Parish Government Mercury: Plaquemines Port Harbor And Terminal
District
Mercury: Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority - East
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough: WeedMaps
The Glover Park Group LLC: BWAY Corporation
The Nimitz Group LLC: Boulder Crest Retreat
Turnberry Solutions, LLC: Elio Motors

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP: Cure SMA

**** A message from the U.S. Chamber's Global Energy Institute:** Ten years ago, gasoline prices were at an all-time high, American dependence on foreign oil and natural gas was growing, and our energy future and security was at risk. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and leaders in American business came together to form an institute to tackle these challenges head on. Now, 10 years later, we're excited to begin our second decade by transitioning to the U.S. Chamber's Global Energy Institute, reflecting America's new role as a global energy superpower. We'll still provide insight and analysis on the big energy issues of our day, along with our unique ability to bring together the entire energy industry and reach thousands in our local and state Chamber network. Learn more about our Institute and the last decade of progress in this video: <http://bit.ly/2yeil2S> **

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Cc: Munoz, Charles[munoz.charles@epa.gov]
From: Ford, Hayley
Sent: Mon 7/3/2017 3:37:05 PM
Subject: 30 Day Report Updates
[EPA Cabinet 30 Day Report 6.27.17.docx](#)

All – See attached for last week’s 30 day report. We are missing some major updates so please try to get those in this week. With the holiday, either try to get your updates to me today or Wednesday by noon at the latest.

Thanks and have a wonderful 4th!

Hayley Ford

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To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Ford, Hayley[ford.hayley@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]; Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]; Letendre, Daisy[letendre.daisy@epa.gov]; Bennett, Tate[Bennett.Tate@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Mon 10/23/2017 3:31:43 PM
Subject: EPA Morning News Highlights 10.23.17

EPA Morning News Highlights 10.19.17

-

The Daily Signal: EPA Chief Set To Bar Government-Funded Experts From Agency's Science Panels

Try asking the nation's top environmental protection official to "describe the shortcomings of the scientific evidence for climate change," and what type of data he might find persuasive on the subject. You might shake loose news of major policy changes designed to end what President Donald Trump's team sees as potential conflicts of interest that undermine the value of scientific advice to the government agency. That opportunity came Tuesday for an audience member during The Heritage Foundation's annual President's Club meeting in Washington, where Scott Pruitt, the former Oklahoma attorney general who now heads up the Environmental Protection Agency, took on that question. Pruitt revealed that he will issue a directive aimed at ensuring the "independence, transparency, and objectivity" of experts who serve on the agency's scientific advisory boards. He suggested he may rule out science advisers with a history of taking EPA grants, sometimes "to the tune of literally tens of millions of dollars."

-

Breitbart: Scott Pruitt: Meeting With Stakeholders Right Approach For Creating Good Environmental Policy

The media is reporting that Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt has been meeting with "polluters," including fossil fuel leaders, ranchers, and farmers. Pruitt is also being accused of dismantling the good works of his predecessors in secrecy, mistreating employees at the agency and even covertly meeting with groups that have faced burdensome regulation under the President Barack Obama administration.

-

The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review: Trib Editorial: An End To EPA's 'Sue & Settle'

The days of special interests potentially forcing policies from the Environmental Protection Agency through a process known as "sue and settle" are over. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has issued guidelines that preclude any regulatory tinkering under the guise of lawsuit

settlements or backdoor deals that limit public comment and/or hamstring the agency's due diligence. "We will no longer go behind closed doors and use consent decrees and settlement agreements to resolve lawsuits filed against the agency by special-interest groups where doing so would circumvent the regulatory process set forth by Congress," Mr. Pruitt said. The Obama administration has denied imposing any illegal regulations originating from EPA settlements with environmental groups. Pruitt's directive simply closes the door to any questionable agreements in the future.

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The Washington Examiner: Trump Administration Wants To Cut Biofuels, Raising Big Worries In Transportation Industry

Parts of the transportation industry are worried that a Trump administration proposal to reduce the amount of biofuels blended into the nation's fuel supply will drive up prices. Convenience store owners and truck stop operators, who interact directly with the users of fuel, say they have plenty at stake if the Renewable Fuel Standard were weakened. "At a high level, truck stops play an integral role in the functioning of the Renewable Fuel Standard, because biodiesel is the most critical renewable fuel source under the program and most biodiesel is sold at truck stops," said David Fialkov, vice president of government relations at the National Association of Truck Stop Owners. "The Renewable Fuel Standard should allow us to incorporate renewable fuel into supply in a manner that allows us to lower the price charged to customers for fuel." The Renewable Fuel Standard, a law passed in 2005 under President George W. Bush to promote renewable fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel, requires a certain amount of biofuels to be blended into the nation's fuel supply. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has proposed targets for 2017 and 2018 that are slightly below current levels after oil companies complained about the costs of blending ethanol and other biofuels.

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The Saint Louis American: EPA Plans To Conduct Further Testing For Radioactive Waste At West Lake Landfill

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to conduct further testing for radioactive contamination at the West Lake Landfill Superfund site in Bridgeton. Albert Kelly, senior adviser to EPA administrator Scott Pruitt and the head of the agency's Superfund Task Force, made the announcement at a forum late Thursday, where members of the community voiced concerns about the landfill. Kelly said he expects the sampling to occur within the next 90 days in the western part of the site, a portion that agency officials often refer to as "Operating Unit 2." The announcement came as good news to area residents, who have long worried that that contamination has damaged their health. EPA officials say they are confident that they know the extent of radioactive waste at the West Lake Landfill. Based on aerial photographs and other data that has tracked the movement of the waste, the EPA had previously stated that it would not conduct more testing. But Kelly said Thursday that the EPA is willing to do so to ensure that it has enough information to allay residents' fears.

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The Wall Street Journal: Trump Caves On Ethanol

The bipartisan pull of corporate welfare—also known as the swamp—is powerful. Last week it swallowed up no less than Donald Trump and his fearless Environmental Protection Agency administrator, Scott Pruitt. They caved under pressure from the ethanol lobby and political extortion from Republican Senators Joni Ernst, Deb Fischer and Chuck Grassley. Mr. Pruitt announced Thursday that EPA won't reduce its proposed 19.24 billion gallon biofuels quota for 2018, and may even increase it. The EPA will further consider giving biofuels a pass to pollute that no other industry enjoys, via what's known as a Reid Vapor Pressure waiver for high-ethanol blends. As bad, the EPA announced it will keep intact a compliance credit scheme that benefits global and integrated oil companies and ethanol producers at the expense of smaller independent refiners and manufacturers. "Renewable identification numbers," or RINs, are a credit created each time a gallon of ethanol is mixed with fuel. The EPA requires refiners to use RINs as proof of compliance with biofuel standards, and credits can be bought or sold. Mr. Trump rode to office promising to drain the swamp and win negotiations on behalf of the American people. But for all of that reform rhetoric, his EPA is now capitulating to one of Washington's worst examples of welfare for big business. By showing weakness, the Trump Administration invites further special-interest shakedowns.

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National Morning News Highlights 10.19.17

NBC News: Mueller Now Investigating Democratic Lobbyist Tony Podesta

Tony Podesta and the Podesta Group are now the subjects of a federal investigation being led by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, three sources with knowledge of the matter told NBC News. The probe of Podesta and his Democratic-leaning lobbying firm grew out of Mueller's inquiry into the finances of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to the sources. As special counsel, Mueller has been tasked with investigating possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. Manafort had organized a public relations campaign for a non-profit called the European Centre for a Modern Ukraine (ECMU). Podesta's company was one of many firms that worked on the campaign, which promoted Ukraine's image in the West. The sources said the investigation into Podesta and his company began as more of a fact-finding mission about the ECMU and Manafort's role in the campaign, but has now morphed into a criminal inquiry into whether the firm violated the Foreign Agents Registration Act, known as FARA.

The Washington Post: National Democrats Are Jittery About Va. Governor's Race

The Democratic National Committee gathered here over the past week with one worry on every activist's mind: We'd better not lose the Virginia governor's race. It's a surprising case of the jitters over a place that hasn't elected a Republican to statewide office in eight years — and that voted resoundingly against Donald Trump last year. But nationally, Democrats haven't won a marquee race since losing the presidency. They lag Republicans in fundraising. A loss for Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam against Republican Ed Gillespie on Nov. 7 could stir doubts about message and strategy just as the party is gearing up nationally for next year's all-important midterm elections. "We're Ground Zero," Susan Swecker, chairwoman of the Democratic Party of Virginia, said inside the Bally's casino here, where party leaders and activists from all 57 states and territories gathered over the past few days. "All eyes are on us. I can understand that, because last year broke my heart." Less clear is whether the jitters will help — or whether a Northam victory gives Democrats any kind of road map for 2018. Leaders and activists spent a lot of time in Las Vegas talking about Nevada and Virginia, two increasingly urban and diverse states that bucked 2016's Trump wave, as models for what every state party could achieve if they organized and elevated their activist base.

The Wall Street Journal: Trump Says 'No Change' To 401(K) Plans Under Forthcoming Tax Proposal

President Donald Trump on Monday morning vowed a popular retirement savings program would remain untouched in the forthcoming Republican tax overhaul proposal. Democratic opponents of the Republican tax plan have said it would favor the wealthiest Americans. In pledging to protect up front tax breaks for the retirement program known as 401(k), Mr. Trump seems intent on rebutting that argument and giving the tax plan a populist hue. "There will be NO change to your 401(k)," the president wrote on Twitter. "This has always been a great and popular middle class tax break that works, and it stays!" Congressional Republicans who are crafting a tax overhaul proposal are looking for ways to generate revenue to support broad reductions in individual tax rates.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Daily Signal

<http://dailysignal.com/2017/10/22/epa-chief-set-bar-government-funded-experts-agencys-science-panels/>

EPA Chief Set To Bar Government-Funded Experts From Agency's Science Panels

By Kevin Mooney, 10/22/17

Try asking the nation's top environmental protection official to "describe the shortcomings of the scientific evidence for climate change," and what type of data he might find persuasive on the subject.

You might shake loose news of major policy changes designed to end what President Donald Trump's team sees as potential conflicts of interest that undermine the value of scientific advice to the government agency.

That opportunity came Tuesday for an audience member during The Heritage Foundation's annual President's Club meeting in Washington, where Scott Pruitt, the former Oklahoma attorney general who now heads up the Environmental Protection Agency, took on that question.

Pruitt revealed that he will issue a directive aimed at ensuring the "independence, transparency, and objectivity" of experts who serve on the agency's scientific advisory boards. He suggested he may rule out science advisers with a history of taking EPA grants, sometimes "to the tune of literally tens of millions of dollars."

"I think what's most important at the agencies is to have scientific advisers who are objective, independent-minded, providing transparent recommendations to me as the administrator and to our office on the decisions that we're making on the efficacy of rules that we're passing to address environmental issues," Pruitt said, adding:

If we have individuals that are on those [scientific advisory] boards that are receiving money from the agency, sometimes going back years and years to the tune of literally tens of millions of dollars over time, that to me causes questions on the independence and the veracity of the transparency of the recommendations that are coming our way.

Pruitt specified the Science Advisory Board, the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, and the Board of Scientific Counselors as concerns during his interview at the Heritage event.

The EPA administrator did not spell out what would be in his directive, but he drew a parallel with the steps he already has taken to end the practice known as sue and settle.

Speaking at length on the topic, he said that sue and settle enabled federal agencies to “engage in rulemaking through the litigation process.” Critics have faulted the practice for permitting environmental advocacy groups to set regulatory policy without input from the public or Congress.

Pruitt’s expected directive could immediately affect the 47-member Science Advisory Board, which is charged with reviewing the quality of scientific information that underpins EPA regulations. The board also reviews EPA research programs and directly advises the administrator.

Terms for 15 members of the Science Advisory Board are set to expire, and the agency has published a list of 132 possible candidates for the open seats.

Some on the list have expressed skepticism in one form or another toward the idea that human activity is the primary driver of climate change, much to the consternation of certain environmental advocacy groups.

These candidates include Kevin Dayaratna, senior statistician at Heritage’s Center for Data Analysis; Craig Idso, senior fellow at Heartland Institute, a free-market think tank; and Paul Driessen, senior policy adviser at the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow, a libertarian environmental organization.

A report in The Washington Post on Pruitt’s interview at the Heritage event with Rob Bluey, editor-in-chief of The Daily Signal, quoted officials with the Natural Resources Defense Council and Union of Concerned Scientists who said the EPA administrator should apply the same standard concerning potential conflicts of interest to science advisers who receive funding from private corporate sources connected with the oil and gas industry.

But Steve Milloy, publisher of JunkScience.com, told The Daily Signal in an email that Pruitt’s

pending directive is right on target.

“For too long, EPA has been able to purchase the ‘science’ it wants from grants-hungry researchers and their universities,” Milloy said, adding:

The EPA would then employ these same scientists to review their own work under the guise of peer review. This system is entirely corrupt if not illegal, as the applicable laws require the boards to be independent and unbiased. Congress has tried to fix this problem, but has been unable. It’s terrific that Scott Pruitt has recognized the seriousness of this problem and is now taking steps to fix it.

Contrary to the howling of the left, this is not a purge of any viewpoints. This is a first step in restoring the purpose of the science review boards—to provide EPA with the various views of experts vs. the rubber-stamping of the agency agenda by cronies. There are many more steps that need to be taken to right the science advisory panel ship at EPA, but this is an important first one.

William Yeatman, a senior fellow with the Washington-based Competitive Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, said he credits Pruitt for compelling the EPA to live up to its own standards. Yeatman cites reports from the agency’s own Office of Inspector General and from Congress, including:

—EPA has taken the position that receipt of government grants doesn’t constitute a financial conflict of interest. However, the agency’s own Peer Review Handbook states that grants can be a conflict of interest if the advisory board plans to address work performed under the research grant.

—Six of the seven members of the 2015 Clean Air Science Advisory Committee, appointed by President Barack Obama, received a total of \$119.2 million in EPA research grants, according to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. The panel, the most important of the science advisory boards, recommends national ambient air quality standards.

—The Obama administration’s prior clean air panel cited its own work more than 700 times, according to the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

“The data suggest that these grants do indeed raise a conflict of interest as EPA defines it,” Yeatman said in an email to The Daily Signal. “So I welcome this reform effort to bring integrity to the advice EPA receives from outside advisers. For better or for worse, there are other federal sources of funding for science (e.g., NSF or NIH). It just makes sense to have EPA comport with its own rules.”

His references were to the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.

During his interview with Bluey, Pruitt also offered up his own definition of environmentalism, in contrast to how he said it has been defined by contemporary advocacy groups:

True environmentalism from my perspective is using natural resources that God has blessed us with to feed the world, to power the world with the sensitivity that future generations cultivate, to harvest, to be respectful good stewards, good managers of our natural resources, to bequeath those natural resources for the next generation.

Breitbart

<http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2017/10/22/epa-meeting-stakeholders-right-approach-creating-good-environmental-policy/>

Scott Pruitt: Meeting With Stakeholders Right Approach For Creating Good Environmental Policy

By Penny Starr, 10/22/17

The media is reporting that Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt has been meeting with “polluters,” including fossil fuel leaders, ranchers, and farmers.

Pruitt is also being accused of dismantling the good works of his predecessors in secrecy, mistreating employees at the agency and even covertly meeting with groups that have faced burdensome regulation under the President Barack Obama administration.

The New York Times reported:

A former Oklahoma attorney general who built his career suing the EPA, and whose LinkedIn profile still describes him as “a leading advocate against the EPA’s activist agenda,” Mr. Pruitt has made it clear that he sees his mission to be dismantling the agency’s policies — and even portions of the institution itself.

But as he works to roll back regulations, close offices and eliminate staff at the agency charged with protecting the nation’s environment and public health, Mr. Pruitt is taking extraordinary measures to conceal his actions, according to interviews with more than 20 current and former agency employees.

Together with a small group of political appointees, many with backgrounds, like his, in Oklahoma politics, and with advice from industry lobbyists, Mr. Pruitt has taken aim at an agency whose policies have been developed and enforced by thousands of the EPA’s career scientists and policy experts, many of whom work in the same building.

“There’s a feeling of paranoia in the agency — employees feel like there’s been a hostile takeover and the guy in charge is treating them like enemies,” Christopher Sellers, director of the Center for the Study of Inequality and Social Justice at Stony Brook University, said in the Times report. He conducted an interview survey with about 40 EPA employees, titled “The EPA Under Siege.”

But in an interview with Time magazine, Pruitt said he is meeting with “stakeholders” in the private sector that he is responsible for regulating as part of the agency’s mission to protect the environment and the health of Americans.

Pruitt said that the recent criticism of his schedule by the Times was unfounded.

“I don’t spend any time with polluters,” Pruitt said. “I prosecute polluters.”

“What I’m spending time with are stakeholders who care about outcomes,” Pruitt said. “I think it’s a wrong premise.”

“It’s Washington, DC—think to look at folks across the country—from states to citizens to farmers and ranchers, industry in general—and say they are evil or wrong and we’re not going to partner with them,” Pruitt said.

Pruitt also questioned the common conception of what it means to be an environmentalist and said that the term also applies to farmers and ranchers who live off the land.

“Those farmers and ranchers in Iowa or North Dakota, are they less of a conservationist or environmentalist because they’re not part of some association?” Pruitt asked. “I mean they are our first environmentalists.”

“Their greatest asset is their land,” Pruitt said.

Liz Bowman, a spokeswoman for the EPA, denied the accounts employees interviewed said about the secrecy surrounding Pruitt.

“None of this is true,” Bowman said. “It’s all rumors.”

In an e-mailed statement, Bowman said:

It's very disappointing, yet not surprising, to learn that you would solicit leaks, and collude with union officials to distract from the work we are doing to implement the president's agenda.

And those who admire the work Pruitt is doing have said he is justified in taking measures to ensure his security because many of the 15,000 employees in the agency are opposed to his policies.

"EPA is legendary for being stocked with leftists," said Steven J. Milloy, a member of President Donald Trump's EPA transition team and author of the book *Scare Pollution: Why and How to Fix the E.P.A.*

"If you work in a hostile environment, you're not the one that's paranoid," Milloy said.

Sen. Thomas R. Carper (D-DE), the top Democrat on the committee overseeing federal government-related operations, has criticized Pruitt for embracing what he described as "a culture of secrecy around everything from his schedule to the way the agency makes scientific determinations," according to the Times.

But an EPA spokesman pushed back against Carper's criticisms.

"Administrator Pruitt has responded to 14 of the 27 oversight letters, which often contain numerous in-depth questions and it takes time to provide an extensive and thorough response," the spokesman said.

The Times report also criticized Pruitt for spending less than one percent of his time with environmental groups.

The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

<http://triblive.com/opinion/editorials/12850517-74/trib-editorial-an-end-to-epas-sue-settle>

Trib Editorial: An End To EPA's 'Sue & Settle'

The Tribune-Review Editorial Board, 10/21/17

The days of special interests potentially forcing policies from the Environmental Protection Agency through a process known as “sue and settle” are over. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has issued guidelines that preclude any regulatory tinkering under the guise of lawsuit settlements or backdoor deals that limit public comment and/or hamstring the agency's due diligence.

“We will no longer go behind closed doors and use consent decrees and settlement agreements to resolve lawsuits filed against the agency by special-interest groups where doing so would circumvent the regulatory process set forth by Congress,” Mr. Pruitt said.

The Obama administration has denied imposing any illegal regulations originating from EPA settlements with environmental groups. Pruitt's directive simply closes the door to any questionable agreements in the future.

Under the new policy, the EPA will contact any state or entity affected when a lawsuit settlement or consent decree is under consideration. It also ensures that the EPA won't create any new regulations in the settlement process.

That's fair. And it should prompt other federal agencies that routinely face agenda-driven litigation to do the same.

Yet Pruitt's move drew rebukes from environmentalists, one of whom predicted that the EPA boss “will be spending a lot more of your taxpayer dollars defending his inaction in court.”

If need be, yes — but openly and without any nodding and winking.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-administration-wants-to-cut-biofuels-raising-big-worries-in-transportation-industry/article/2638062>

Trump Administration Wants To Cut Biofuels, Raising Big Worries In Transportation Industry

By Josh Siegel, 10/23/17

Parts of the transportation industry are worried that a Trump administration proposal to reduce the amount of biofuels blended into the nation's fuel supply will drive up prices.

Convenience store owners and truck stop operators, who interact directly with the users of fuel, say they have plenty at stake if the Renewable Fuel Standard were weakened.

"At a high level, truck stops play an integral role in the functioning of the Renewable Fuel Standard, because biodiesel is the most critical renewable fuel source under the program and most biodiesel is sold at truck stops," said David Fialkov, vice president of government relations at the National Association of Truck Stop Owners. "The Renewable Fuel Standard should allow us to incorporate renewable fuel into supply in a manner that allows us to lower the price charged to customers for fuel."

The Renewable Fuel Standard, a law passed in 2005 under President George W. Bush to promote renewable fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel, requires a certain amount of biofuels to be blended into the nation's fuel supply.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has proposed targets for 2017 and 2018 that are slightly below current levels after oil companies complained about the costs of blending ethanol and other biofuels.

Under the law, refiners must blend ethanol or other biofuels into their products or purchase

credits, known as Renewable Identification Numbers, from refiners that do.

The prices of those credits, which had been stable, have jumped in recent years, which oil refiners say drive up pump prices for consumers.

The EPA, which must finalize the regulations by Nov. 30, is looking to cut the total renewable fuel requirement from 19.24 billion gallons under the proposed 2018 standard to 18.77 billion gallons for 2019, a 2.5 percent cut.

It proposed cutting the already established 2018 volumes of biodiesel, which was set at 2.1 billion gallons, by up to 315 million gallons, which would be 15 percent.

Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, and other Midwestern lawmakers have threatened to hold up President Trump's EPA nominees over the proposed cut, arguing the move would result in job losses for local farmers that produce the corn, soybeans and other agricultural components that go into the fuel.

Fialkov, the truck stop representative, and others working in the transportation industry, have different concerns.

Biodiesel is primarily used to fuel trucks, and Fialkov says the Renewable Fuel Standard has made the fuel cost competitive with traditional diesel.

"Lowering the renewable fuel mandates under the Renewable Fuel Standard would disincentivize many truck stop operators from blending biodiesel and selling biodiesel," Fialkov said. "For truck stop operators who are able to effectively blend and capture value associated with blending biofuels, they are able to sell fuel at a lower price, and that drives more volume. If the EPA discourages us from blending biodiesel in a manner that raises the price of fuel, invariably we will blend less biodiesel, which will raise the cost of fuel. Truckers will continue to drive, but just pay more."

The trucking industry, meanwhile, is not taking an official position on the proposal. Glen Kedzie of the American Trucking Associations says his trade group is watching the debate closely.

The organization represents large companies such as UPS, FedEx, and Walmart, as well as smaller entities that use 20 trucks or less.

The nation's "3.5 million truck drivers in our industry want to make sure fuel is available to move trucks and can get products to shelves," Kedzie said. "We are very price sensitive to fuel. It's our lifeblood."

Kedzie says costs of biodiesel have been stable because of the EPA mandate, as truckers have come to rely on the fuel.

"We typically use consumer biodiesel, not by choice, but by requirement," Kedzie said. "If you are a fleet and have to refuel in a state with a strong mandate like Minnesota, Pennsylvania, or California, you are a captive audience on what you put in your tank. The costs are kept in check — or at least had been kept in check."

The trucking industry has small profit margins. He says trucking companies compete for jobs primarily on costs and that uncertainty about fuel supply policy could complicate planning efforts.

"Everyone is competing to haul a load from Point A to Point B," Kedzie said. "Labor costs are set. You know what you will pay a driver. You need to nail down what the cost of fuel is. The low bidder would get that load. You better be pretty accurate in predicting what the price of fuel will be."

Paige Anderson, director of government relations at the Association for Convenience and Fuel Retailing, has similar worries.

Her trade group represents more than 154,000 convenience stores across the U.S. that sell 80 percent of the country's motor fuel, she said.

Anderson is concerned that the EPA's proposal treats biodiesel differently than other biofuels.

"We are very concerned with this latest EPA effort to bring that one obligation down so low without looking at the others," Anderson said. "All obligations are intertwined. Either you need to lower all obligations or keep it as is."

Economic and energy experts say they expect the EPA's proposed changes to have little impact on the transportation industry and consumers, mostly because biofuels represent only about 10 percent of total transport fuel in the U.S.

"Even increased mandates of biofuels still represent a very small percentage of the overall transportation fuel market," said Nick Loris, an economist at the Heritage Foundation who focuses on environmental and energy issues. "You won't see a serious economic impact on consumers from reducing biofuel."

Loris, who opposes the Renewable Fuel Standard, said the mandate creates distortions in the marketplace.

"Policies change all the time," Loris said. "In some instances, there will be winners, in others there will be losers. It's OK to discount the certainty for an industry if it's relying on a mandate or subsidies or preferential treatment from the federal government. We have to see whether biofuels can be stable in a market where there is no RFS."

Christopher Knittel, an economics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, also says consumers won't be affected by changes to the biofuel rules.

"We know from basic economics that a stricter RFS puts upward pressure on retail prices, but because it's a small share of total fuel, it never will have a huge impact on what consumers pay," Knittel said. "The RFS is a small tax on 10 percent of our fuel spread across the U.S. Even though it is good at giving money to the Midwest, no one feels pain from it on a large scale. I don't think this policy should live or die based on how it impacts retail prices."

Anderson says she is trying to be ready for anything after the public comment period on the EPA's proposed changes ended Oct. 19.

Because of widespread opposition to the plan, the White House recently asked the EPA to halt its changes. And Thursday night, Pruitt ensured Republicans that he would keep the standard intact, although it is too early to say for sure what will happen.

"Uncertainty makes me ask a lot of questions," Anderson said. "Uncertainty means, are we going to be able to get a product we need to blend? Are we going to be able to get product at a competitive price? Is product going to become scarce? Are we going to be raising the cost of blending biofuel? If that's the case, will it raise costs for consumers? Ultimately, that's what uncertainty does."

The Saint Louis American

http://www.stlamERICAN.com/news/local_news/epa-plans-to-conduct-further-testing-for-radioactive-waste-at/article_db2bb120-b5ce-11e7-9554-679027b824c4.html

EPA Plans To Conduct Further Testing For Radioactive Waste At West Lake Landfill

By Eli Chen, 10/20/17

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to conduct further testing for radioactive contamination at the West Lake Landfill Superfund site in Bridgeton.

Albert Kelly, senior adviser to EPA administrator Scott Pruitt and the head of the agency's Superfund Task Force, made the announcement at a forum late Thursday, where members of the community voiced concerns about the landfill. Kelly said he expects the sampling to occur

within the next 90 days in the western part of the site, a portion that agency officials often refer to as "Operating Unit 2."

The announcement came as good news to area residents, who have long worried that that contamination has damaged their health.

EPA officials say they are confident that they know the extent of radioactive waste at the West Lake Landfill. Based on aerial photographs and other data that has tracked the movement of the waste, the EPA had previously stated that it would not conduct more testing. But Kelly said Thursday that the EPA is willing to do so to ensure that it has enough information to allay residents' fears.

"We think it's very doubtful that you're going to find other radioactive places," he said. "But if in fact that will put to rest the concern that people have, then we're going to do that."

People in the community who have complained that the contamination could be connected to local cases of cancer and autoimmune disease have insisted that federal officials perform more tests.

"This is a huge win for the community," said Dawn Chapman, co-founder of the Just Moms STL activist group. "We've only been asking for five years."

She also said that Kelly's visit to Bridgeton made her feel optimistic that federal officials are moving towards a solution for the site. "I think we're closer to a remedy than we've ever been. And there's something about this guy that makes me believe him," Chapman said.

The West Lake Landfill has been on the EPA's National Priorities List since 1990. The World War II-era radioactive waste underneath it sits approximately 600 feet from a smoldering fire under the adjacent Bridgeton Landfill.

"This has been 27 years and how many people have been damaged [by] the inaction in years past?" Kelly said. "We're going to stop that so we don't have another generation of people who have health issues over this and we're going to do our very, very best to get this as clean as a whistle."

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-caves-on-ethanol-1508703048?mg=prod/accounts-wsj>

Trump Caves On Ethanol

The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board, 10/22/17

The bipartisan pull of corporate welfare—also known as the swamp—is powerful. Last week it swallowed up no less than Donald Trump and his fearless Environmental Protection Agency administrator, Scott Pruitt. They caved under pressure from the ethanol lobby and political extortion from Republican Senators Joni Ernst, Deb Fischer and Chuck Grassley.

Mr. Pruitt announced Thursday that EPA won't reduce its proposed 19.24 billion gallon biofuels quota for 2018, and may even increase it. The EPA will further consider giving biofuels a pass to pollute that no other industry enjoys, via what's known as a Reid Vapor Pressure waiver for high-ethanol blends.

As bad, the EPA announced it will keep intact a compliance credit scheme that benefits global and integrated oil companies and ethanol producers at the expense of smaller independent refiners and manufacturers. "Renewable identification numbers," or RINs, are a credit created each time a gallon of ethanol is mixed with fuel. The EPA requires refiners to use RINs as proof of compliance with biofuel standards, and credits can be bought or sold.

Because only major global refiners have the capabilities to blend their own fuel, most small and midsize merchant refiners have no way of producing RINs in-house. Big Oil, the ethanol lobby and speculators have cornered the market for the credits, and RIN prices are soaring.

In 2012 Philadelphia Energy Solutions paid \$10 million for RINs. This year, it will spend \$300

million, twice the price of payroll. Only crude oil—the refinery’s main input—costs more annually. Because of that skyrocketing expense, Moody’s has dropped the refinery’s credit rating from a B+ to a CCC- in four years. Mr. Pruitt’s announcement means it will get no RIN relief.

These independent refiners provide the sort of blue-collar manufacturing jobs that President Trump promised to protect. Philadelphia Energy Solutions had to lay off 70 workers last year. Ryan O’Callaghan, the president of United Steelworkers Local 10-1, said the EPA announcement makes him fearful for the fate of his 692 members who remain at the refinery. Philadelphia Energy Solutions also uses hundreds of contractors from the building trades unions.

“I voted Donald Trump, I urged my members to vote for Donald Trump, and I urged them to ask their families and friends to vote for Donald Trump,” Mr. O’Callaghan said. “As a union president, to support a Republican candidate for president, there was some backlash. And now we’re left out in the cold. It’s very disappointing. It feels like the government has the chips stacked against us. We’re crushed in between Big Oil and Big Ethanol. I thought President Trump would be able to see through that. Hopefully he changes his mind and goes with workers.”

The Trump Administration betrayed these manufacturing workers after threats from a handful of Republican Senators who were willing to vote with Democrats to protect ethanol. The federal government has to compel consumers to use biofuels because the product doesn’t sell on its own merits. Thirty-three pro-ethanol Senators admitted as much in a letter to the EPA this month.

“The industry is poised for growth, in accordance with the intent of the law, if EPA sends the market signals with increased volumes,” this bipartisan group wrote. But any decrease in the mandate would be “disruptive, unprecedented and very troubling.”

Mr. Grassley said that if Mr. Pruitt failed to follow these Senatorial directives, he would “hold up EPA nominees. I think there’s plenty of senators [who] would do that.” Mr. Grassley doesn’t sit on the Environment and Public Works Committee, but Senators Ernst and Fischer do.

One of their hostages was Bill Wehrum, the nominee to run the Office of Air and Radiation. That office administers the all-powerful Clean Air Act, so the sudden bout of bipartisanship threatened Mr. Pruitt’s broader reform agenda at the EPA.

Mr. Trump rode to office promising to drain the swamp and win negotiations on behalf of the American people. But for all of that reform rhetoric, his EPA is now capitulating to one of Washington's worst examples of welfare for big business. By showing weakness, the Trump Administration invites further special-interest shakedowns.

NBC News

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/mueller-now-investigating-democratic-lobbyist-tony-podesta-n812776>

Mueller Now Investigating Democratic Lobbyist Tony Podesta

By Tom Winter And Julia Ainsley, 10/23/17

WASHINGTON — Tony Podesta and the Podesta Group are now the subjects of a federal investigation being led by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, three sources with knowledge of the matter told NBC News.

The probe of Podesta and his Democratic-leaning lobbying firm grew out of Mueller's inquiry into the finances of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to the sources. As special counsel, Mueller has been tasked with investigating possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia.

Manafort had organized a public relations campaign for a non-profit called the European Centre for a Modern Ukraine (ECMU). Podesta's company was one of many firms that worked on the campaign, which promoted Ukraine's image in the West.

The sources said the investigation into Podesta and his company began as more of a fact-finding mission about the ECMU and Manafort's role in the campaign, but has now morphed into a criminal inquiry into whether the firm violated the Foreign Agents Registration Act, known as FARA.

Under FARA, people who lobby on behalf of foreign governments, leaders or political parties must file detailed disclosures about their spending and activities with the Justice Department. Willful failure to file the forms is a felony and can result in up to five years in prison, though such prosecutions are rare.

The Podesta Group filed a FARA registration for its work with ECMU only after the payments were reported by the media. Manafort's firm also filed a FARA registration after media reports in June disclosed its work in Ukraine from 2012 through 2014.

The ECMU was reportedly backed by the Party of Regions, the pro-Russian and oligarch-funded Ukrainian political party for which Manafort worked as a consultant, and which paid his firm millions. Viktor Yanukovich of the Party of Regions, a Manafort client, was president of Ukraine during the ECMU campaign, which ran from 2012 to 2014. He fled the country in 2014.

Tony Podesta is the chairman of the Podesta Group and the brother of John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign chairman. John Podesta is not currently affiliated with the Podesta Group and is not part of Mueller's investigation.

In a statement, a spokesman for the Podesta Group said the firm "is cooperating fully with the Special Counsel's office and has taken every possible step to provide documentation that confirms timely compliance. In all of our client engagements, the Podesta Group conducts due diligence and consults with appropriate legal experts to ensure compliance with disclosure regulations at all times — and we did so in this case."

A spokesperson for Mueller's office declined to comment.

In late August, NBC News reported that Special Counsel Mueller's team sent subpoenas to six firms who were involved in public relations lobbying for ECMU.

The subpoenas sought testimony from public relations executives who worked on the campaign organized by Manafort, people directly familiar with the matter told NBC News.

One source with knowledge of the investigation said that federal investigators have now met with several former staffers of the various firms involved in the ECMU campaign.

Mueller's team is closely examining the lobbying campaign, which ran between 2012 and 2014. Six firms participated in the public relations effort that Manafort coordinated, paid for by the Brussels-based ECMU. The stated goal was to build support for Ukraine's entry into the European Union, the same source said.

Related: Mueller Seeks Testimony From PR Firms That Worked With Manafort

Two of the firms, Podesta Group and Mercury LLC, worked in Washington with Manafort partner Rick Gates, according to lobbying disclosure records. Three other firms worked in Europe, the executive said. NBC News could not confirm the identity of those three.

Manafort, whose Alexandria, Virginia, apartment was raided by FBI agents in July, has emerged as a key figure in the Mueller probe. The inquiry into the lobbying campaign appears to be part of a larger investigation into his work for the Party of Regions, his offshore banking transactions, his tax compliance and his real estate dealings, people familiar with the probe have told NBC News.

The Associated Press first revealed the pro-Ukraine lobbying campaign in August 2016, while Manafort was still running the Trump campaign. Manafort left the campaign within days.

The report said the ECMU campaign was designed to sway public opinion and included attempts to solicit favorable press coverage in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.

The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/national-democrats-are-jittery-about-va-governors->

National Democrats Are Jittery About Va. Governor's Race

By David Weigel And Ed O'Keefe, 10/22/17

LAS VEGAS — The Democratic National Committee gathered here over the past week with one worry on every activist's mind: We'd better not lose the Virginia governor's race.

It's a surprising case of the jitters over a place that hasn't elected a Republican to statewide office in eight years — and that voted resoundingly against Donald Trump last year. But nationally, Democrats haven't won a marquee race since losing the presidency. They lag Republicans in fundraising. A loss for Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam against Republican Ed Gillespie on Nov. 7 could stir doubts about message and strategy just as the party is gearing up nationally for next year's all-important midterm elections.

"We're Ground Zero," Susan Swecker, chairwoman of the Democratic Party of Virginia, said inside the Bally's casino here, where party leaders and activists from all 57 states and territories gathered over the past few days. "All eyes are on us. I can understand that, because last year broke my heart."

Less clear is whether the jitters will help — or whether a Northam victory gives Democrats any kind of road map for 2018. Leaders and activists spent a lot of time in Las Vegas talking about Nevada and Virginia, two increasingly urban and diverse states that bucked 2016's Trump wave, as models for what every state party could achieve if they organized and elevated their activist base.

They spent less time talking about Trump's winning message on jobs and fairness, or the states where it was so effective, or how to win in those places with a sales pitch of their own.

"From a branding perspective, we have a huge problem," said Ken Martin, the chairman of Minnesota's Democratic Farmer-Labor Party. "It was the biggest challenge for us in the last year — and our biggest mistake was uniting around 'Stop Trump.'"

Defeat in Virginia could also prompt another brawl between progressive activists and the party's establishment. Northam, backed by most of Virginia's elected Democrats, won his nomination over Sen. Bernie Sanders-backed former congressman Tom Perriello — a race that some activists saw as a replay of the 2016 Democratic presidential primaries.

Northam's defeat would let activists argue that the party that picked Hillary Clinton over Sanders (Vt.), and Tom Perez over Sanders-backed Rep. Keith Ellison (Minn.) for Democratic National Committee chairman in February, had once again bet against progressives and lost. It would set the stage for more infighting in 2018.

Ideology aside, most party leaders seemed bent on avoiding in Virginia the kind of overconfidence they say settled in near the end in 2016, when many Democrats assumed that Clinton would win the presidency.

"That sense of complacency led people to take their foot off the gas," Martin said. "We saw a dip in volunteers in the last few weeks, turnout dropped. That can't ever happen again."

Perez went further, rebuking Democrats who believe Virginia is now solidly, safely, permanently blue after years of population growth in the diverse suburbs of Washington. "I hear 'demographics is destiny' and it's nails on a chalkboard to me," the DNC chairman said at a session here over the weekend. "Demographics is not destiny. Organizing is destiny."

Northam, a former Army doctor and pediatric neurologist, is in a neck-and-neck race with Gillespie, a former lobbyist and GOP strategist. There are a number of reasons to wonder whether Democrats can retain the executive mansion, which Terry McAuliffe now occupies.

Virginia gubernatorial candidate Ed Gillespie is a former chairman of the RNC and a former lobbyist. (Steve Helber/AP)

The DNC began pouring resources into Virginia in July, spending \$1.5 million up front to hire 40 staff members. In addition, national staff members were loaned out to run communications for campaigns down the ballot. The party paid for direct mail to nonwhite voters; DNC Hispanic

Media Director Francisco Pelayo and party operative Andrea Peoples were tasked with outreach to Latino and black female voters.

But they're doing it with less money than the Republican National Committee. The DNC raised \$4.4 million in August and spent slightly more money than it took in. As of last month, its debt — \$4.1 million — was almost twice the size of its cash reserves. The RNC, meanwhile, reported \$45.9 million in the bank and no debt. With less fanfare than the DNC, it has spent \$3 million in Virginia, helping fund 80 staff members on the ground for Republican campaigns.

“The RNC never left Virginia and has had field staff on the ground since 2013,” said RNC spokesman Michael Ahrens.

The Northam-Gillespie race has heated up in the last month, as Gillespie, who once urged his party to moderate on immigration, launched half a dozen TV and radio ads warning that Northam would leave Virginia vulnerable to the Central American gang MS-13 by refusing to ban “sanctuary cities” with policies of protecting illegal immigrants and not cooperating with federal authorities to deport them. (Virginia does not have sanctuary cities.)

Democrats have jumped at the chance to link Gillespie with Trump.

“We’ve got an opponent who’s running a Donald Trump-style campaign,” Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) said in a video message to the gathering in Las Vegas.

“We’ve watched a Republican nominee for governor run racially tinged ads that play on our fears,” said former attorney general Eric H. Holder Jr. Former president Barack Obama delivered a similar critique of Gillespie at a Northam rally in Richmond last week.

But the party’s broader strategy for winning in states Trump won has been less of a focus.

Democrats believe Trump would have lost the White House last year had he not stolen the

mantle of populism, a traditionally Democratic message. But there was not much soul-searching about messaging among those who convened in Las Vegas. There was no debate about the “identity politics” that the party’s critics accused them of embracing in 2016, and little discussion of how to communicate differently in the states that supported Trump last year.

Instead, party leaders focused heavily on organizing and engaging the base.

The DNC, for instance, is looking at Virginia and New Jersey, the other state with a governor’s race next month, to test new voter outreach technology. In an interview, DNC Chief Technology Officer Raffi Krikorian said the party had deployed Facebook messenger bots, texts to likely voters, and tactics for encouraging volunteers to turn their own social-media contacts into voters.

“My team’s focus is on how we get tools in the hands of activists and state parties,” Krikorian said. “We’re seeing if we can leverage friends effectively. Instead of doing canvassing on a geographic basis, what if we start with your circle of friends?”

The year so far has frustrated Democrats trying to turn Trump’s high disapproval ratings, and the burning energy of political activists, into votes. Democrats have over-performed in a series of special legislative races. And the DNC is helping Washington Democrats ahead of a Nov. 7 special election that could flip the state’s Senate from red to blue. But the investments haven’t yet paid off with victories. The DNC spent \$2 million and hired 10 staff members to boost Jon Ossoff’s campaign for a House seat in suburban Atlanta — a historically expensive race that Republicans ended up winning.

In interviews, state party leaders said they have spent the year rebuilding. Jane Kleebe, the chairwoman of Nebraska’s Democrats, assembled a list of the state’s Democratic officeholders because none existed. Stephen Webber, the chairman of Missouri’s Democrats, told a Midwestern caucus meeting that his party had developed a message for rural counties “where we used to win 60 percent of the vote and now barely win 15 percent” — a populist campaign against corporate farming conglomerates.

An additional challenge as 2018 approaches is keeping the battles inside the party at bay.

In Las Vegas, some Democrats remained committed to those battles. For the first two days of a four-day meeting, much of the news coverage focused on a conflict over the list of the party's at-large membership, which included several lobbyists; at a Friday meeting, the resolutions committee put the party on record against any donations from people who represent corporate interests that the party opposes.

But for most Democrats, the best way to stave off another round of infighting is to win.

Said Holder: "Now is not a time for our party to be beholden to ideological litmus tests. We're held together by common interests."

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-says-no-change-to-401-k-plans-under-forthcoming-tax-proposal-1508761011>

Trump Says 'No Change' To 401(K) Plans Under Forthcoming Tax Proposal

By Richard Rubin and Peter Nicholas, 10/23/17

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump on Monday morning vowed a popular retirement savings program would remain untouched in the forthcoming Republican tax overhaul proposal.

Democratic opponents of the Republican tax plan have said it would favor the wealthiest Americans. In pledging to protect up front tax breaks for the retirement program known as 401(k), Mr. Trump seems intent on rebutting that argument and giving the tax plan a populist hue.

"There will be NO change to your 401(k)," the president wrote on Twitter. "This has always been a great and popular middle class tax break that works, and it stays!"

Congressional Republicans who are crafting a tax overhaul proposal are looking for ways to generate revenue to support broad reductions in individual tax rates.

One idea would limit the amount of pretax money households can sock away for retirement saving. Such a move would likely generate significant political blowback, but it hasn't been explicitly ruled out, stirring worry among industry lobbyists.

Lobbyists and others in the retirement and financial-services industries who have spoken to congressional staff and committee members say lawmakers are looking at proposals that would allow 401(k) participants to contribute significantly less before taxes than what is currently allowed in a traditional tax-deferred 401(k). An often mentioned amount is \$2,400 a year. It isn't clear whether that would apply only to 401(k)s or IRAs, or both.

Currently, employees under age 50 can save up to \$18,000 a year in a 401(k) before taxes, while those 50 or older can set aside up to \$24,000. In an IRA, the annual contribution limits are capped at \$5,500 and \$6,500 for the same age groupings. The 401(k) limits are scheduled to rise to \$18,500 and \$24,500 in 2018.

Members of the House Ways and Means Committee are widely expected to release a version of the tax bill by mid-November.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 1h



I had a very respectful conversation with the widow of Sgt. La David Johnson, and spoke his name from beginning, without hesitation!

💬 21K ↻ 4.7K ❤️ 22K ✉



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 2h



Two dozen NFL players continue to kneel during the National Anthem, showing total disrespect to our Flag & Country. No leadership in NFL!

💬 17K ↻ 7.9K ❤️ 34K ✉



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 2h



There will be NO change to your 401(k). This has always been a great and popular middle class tax break that works, and it stays!

💬 5.7K ↻ 7.9K ❤️ 34K ✉

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Thur 5/11/2017 10:45:54 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by PhRMA: COMEY tick-tocks galore -- NEW Quinnipiac Poll: Trump's near-record low approval rating -- WAPO: ROD ROSENSTEIN threatened to quit -- TRUMP may go to FBI Friday -- SUSAN GLASSER on Russia's 'Oval Office victory da...

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by PhRMA
05/11/2017 06:40 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

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Good Thursday morning from San Francisco. And welcome to day three of "ComeyGate." The past 48 hours has been a political and P.R. disaster for President Donald Trump and the White House. By all accounts, Trump's decision to dump FBI Director James Comey wasn't based on a methodical review of the facts. Instead, it appears like many of Trump's more controversial decisions to be a gut-check driven response based purely on personal animus in this case -- Comey wasn't loyal enough, didn't support Trump's claims that former President Barack Obama wiretapped him and wasn't moving fast enough to find those responsible for leaks about Trump.

NEW QUINNIPIAC POLL -- "American voters, who gave President Donald Trump a slight approval bump after the missile strike in Syria, today give him a near-record negative 36 - 58 percent job approval rating, according to a Quinnipiac University national poll released [Wednesday]. Critical are big losses among white voters with no college degree, white men and independent voters. ... Today's job approval rating compares to a negative 40 - 56 percent approval rating in an April 19 survey ... American voters' opinions of several of Trump's personal qualities are down: 61 - 33 percent that he is not honest, compared to 58 - 37 percent April 19." <http://bit.ly/2r4DTLx>

-- THOSE NUMBERS are brutal for Trump, particularly the losses among key demographics of the Trump coalition. It's important to note: the poll was commissioned

before Comey's firing, so Trump's approval is unlikely to rebound anytime soon.

REPLACEMENT WATCH -- Top Republicans on Capitol Hill tell us that Trump has been soliciting suggestions on who should be the next FBI director. The fact that Trump went ahead with firing Comey without a replacement in mind is stunning. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein - who played key roles in Comey's ouster - are reportedly moving quickly to find a replacement, possibly coming up with a choice in the next few days, ABC News reports. However, that person will face a potentially brutal nomination hearing, as many Republicans and Democrats will use the hearings to vent their frustration over the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 elections.

-- BUZZ -- KELLY AYOTTE FOR FBI? Ayotte, the former New Hampshire Republican senator who helped shepherd Neil Gorsuch through his Supreme Court confirmation process, would make sense: she's a former state attorney general. Her confirmation would sail through the Senate.

IT'S NOT JUST DEMOCRATS -- who are frustrated with Trump. Sen. Richard Burr has been one of the most upset by Comey's dismissal. This could be a big problem for Trump. The North Carolina Republican is leading the Senate probe into Russia. Burr and Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.) invited Comey to testify in private before the Senate Intelligence Committee next week.

SOMETHING TO WATCH -- The Senate Intel Committee subpoenaed former national security advisor Michael Flynn - fired by Trump after being caught lying about his discussions with Russian officials - demanding any Russia related documents he has. **See Ali Watkins' piece** <http://politi.co/2qW4aP9> Flynn, who is under investigation over his failure to disclose Turkey lobbying, has refused to appear before the panel unless granted immunity.

DEMOCRATS may be outraged by Comey's firing, but there's very little they can do about it except protest, for now. Democrats' calls demanding a select committee and special prosecutor to look into Russia aren't likely to happen at this point. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Speaker Paul Ryan have made that clear. But that isn't stopping them from pushing to expand the Russia probe. (***Big thanks to Bres for sending his late-night thoughts on the view from Capitol Hill***)

WE ASKED, YOU ANSWERED -- "Pete Sessions: Comey should have been removed 'in a more gracious way,'" by Dallas Morning News' Keven Ann Willey: "Texas GOP Rep. Pete Sessions of Dallas, whose father was the last FBI director ousted by a president, said Wednesday that ... the president, in a face-to-face meeting, should have given Comey the opportunity to step down. That would have avoided the issue of 'a firing.' That word, Sessions said, is 'a tag on a man who ... performed reasonably well and it got out of hand.'" <http://bit.ly/2pl9oE6>

JIM COMEY's farewell letter to F.B.I. staff: "I have said to you before that, in times of

turbulence, the American people should see the FBI as a rock of competence, honesty, and independence. ... My hope is that you will continue to live our values and the mission of protecting the American people and upholding the Constitution."

<http://bit.ly/2q5nEiZ>

ROGER STONE fires back at POTUS -- statement emailed at 5:47 a.m. this morning: "With all due respect to the President, I am not the source of the New York Times, Politico or CNN stories and have never claimed I convinced the President to fire FBI Director Comey. Both Politico and the Times claim to have multiple credible sources for their reports. I offered no comment. ... It has been my policy not to discuss the scope, subject or frequency of my occasional contacts with the President and I am not going to do so today." <http://politi.co/2q8bSmk>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- NYT's Mike Shear, Jennifer Steinhauer and Matt Flegenheimer: "Mr. Trump is weighing going to the F.B.I. headquarters in Washington on Friday as a show of his commitment to the bureau, an official said, though he is not expected to discuss the Russia investigation." <http://nyti.ms/2quYD2f>

-- **"Trump and Putin to meet in July, Russian state media says,"** by CNN's Ben Westcott and Tomas Etzler: "U.S. President Donald Trump will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin in July as part of the G20 summit in Hamburg, Russian state media said Thursday. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov made the announcement after meeting with Trump in Washington Wednesday, according to Tass. If confirmed, it would be the two men's first meeting since Trump took power in January. The White House has yet to confirm." <http://cnn.it/2q8gUPT>

A BIG THANK YOU to House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif), Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.) and California Attorney General Xavier Becerra for participating in our first Playbook Exchange in San Francisco.

MCCARTHY, who has spoken to Trump about Comey's firing, defended the president's decision. Cristiano Lima reports: "McCarthy, broaching the subject for the first time since Comey's ouster late Tuesday afternoon, said the director had drawn politics into the bureau by acting beyond the reach of his role. 'I would argue that Comey made the FBI political,' he said. 'That's probably not the place to be.' McCarthy added that Comey had made himself 'a household name,' something he argued no FBI director should do."

<http://politi.co/2q5eUK6> ... **The video** <http://politi.co/2q84szk>

***** **A message from PhRMA: Patients share the costs of medicines. They should share the savings.** Robust negotiations between biopharmaceutical companies and insurers often result in significant rebates and discounts. Insurers should share more of these rebates with patients. Providing access to discounted prices at the point of sale could dramatically lower patients' out-of-pocket costs. Learn more at <http://onphr.ma/2pdaE7m>. *****

COMEY TICK-TOCKS GALORE - JOSH DAWSEY, "'He got tired of him'": "Telling

Congress that he was 'mildly nauseous' at the thought of having influenced the presidential election may have won former FBI director James Comey plaudits among Democrats and within the bureau. But his choice of words may have doomed him with President Donald Trump. He found the testimony last week infuriating and griped about it extensively for at least two days, several associates and advisers said. ... [S]enior aides and other associates who know the president say the firing was triggered not by any one event but rather by the president's growing frustration with the Russia investigation, negative media coverage and the growing feeling that he couldn't control Comey, who was a near-constant presence on television in recent days.

"Trump did not appreciate that Comey declared his campaign to be under investigation on live TV, said two people who know the president well. He didn't like that Comey contradicted his unsubstantiated accusation that President Barack Obama tapped his phone line at Trump Tower. And Trump was displeased that the FBI seemed uninterested in pursuing investigations into the leaks he believes are weakening his administration." <http://politi.co/2r3LkTd>

-- **"Inside Trump's anger and impatience - and his sudden decision to fire Comey,"** by WaPo's Phil Rucker, Ashley Parker, Devlin Barrett and Robert Costa: "By last weekend, he had made up his mind: Comey had to go. At his golf course in Bedminster, N.J., Trump grouched over Comey's latest congressional testimony, which he thought was 'strange,' and grew impatient with what he viewed as his sanctimony, according to White House officials. Comey, Trump figured, was using the Russia probe to become a martyr. Back at work Monday morning in Washington, Trump told Vice President Pence and several senior aides - Reince Priebus, Stephen K. Bannon and Donald McGahn, among others - that he was ready to move on Comey. ...

"Rosenstein threatened to resign after the narrative emerging from the White House on Tuesday evening cast him as a prime mover of the decision to fire Comey and that the president acted only on his recommendation, said the person close to the White House, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. ... Ivanka Trump, the president's daughter, and her husband, Jared Kushner - both of whom work in the White House - have frequently tried to blunt Trump's riskier impulses but did not intervene to try to persuade him against firing Comey, according to two senior officials." <http://wapo.st/2pzuyti>

--**"'Enough Was Enough': How Festering Anger at Comey Ended in His Firing,"** by NYT's Maggie Haberman, Glenn Thrush, Mike Schmidt and Peter Baker: "The chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon, who has been sharply critical of the F.B.I., questioned whether the time was right to dismiss Mr. Comey, arguing that doing it later would lessen the backlash, and urged him to delay, according to two people familiar with his thinking. Reince Priebus, the White House chief of staff, at one point mulled similar concerns, but was supportive of the move to the president." <http://nyti.ms/2pzj3lz>

-- **"Comey's Firing Came as Investigators Stepped Up Russia Probe,"** by WSJ's Shane Harris and Carol E. Lee: "In the weeks before President Donald Trump fired FBI

Director James Comey, a federal investigation into potential collusion between Trump associates and the Russian government was heating up, as Mr. Comey became increasingly occupied with the probe. Mr. Comey started receiving daily instead of weekly updates on the investigation, beginning at least three weeks ago, according to people with knowledge of the matter and the progress of the Federal Bureau of Investigation probe. Mr. Comey was concerned by information showing possible evidence of collusion, according to these people." <http://on.wsj.com/2qVMkM8>

SUSAN GLASSER in POLITICO MAGAZINE -- "Russia's Oval Office Victory Dance:

The cozy meeting between President Trump and Russia's foreign minister came at Vladimir Putin's insistence": "When President Donald Trump hosted Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in the Oval Office Wednesday just hours after firing the FBI director who was overseeing an investigation into whether Trump's team colluded the Russians, he was breaking with recent precedent at the specific request of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"The chummy White House visit -- photos of the president yukking it up with Lavrov and Russian Ambassador to the United States Sergey Kislyak were released by the Russian Foreign Ministry since no U.S. press was allowed to cover the visit -- had been one of Putin's asks in his recent phone call with Trump, And indeed the White House acknowledged this to me later Wednesday. 'He chose to receive him because Putin asked him to,' a White House spokesman said of Trump's Lavrov meeting. 'Putin did specifically ask on the call when they last talked.'" <http://politi.co/2pyEV0A>

BACK IN THE FOLD -- "Sessions emerges as Trump's most valuable ally," by Eliana Johnson: "President Donald Trump was infuriated in early March when Jeff Sessions recused himself from any investigations related to the 2016 presidential campaign. And yet, despite being legally sidelined from the investigation into Russia's meddling in the 2016 election, the attorney general - the ultimate Trump loyalist - has now played an indispensable political role by helping slow it down. ... At Trump's request, Sessions and set forth their rationale in twin memos the following day. News of his meeting with the president - as well his memo, which advised Trump that 'a fresh start is needed at the leadership of the FBI' - served as Trump's first line of defense against accusations he had acted impetuously when he fired Comey without warning on Tuesday evening.

"The drama was fresh evidence of Sessions' role as a critical political player in the Trump cabinet. He has exhibited all the qualities of loyalty Trump most prizes: He was the first senator to endorse him, one of the only members of the upper chamber to embrace him enthusiastically during the presidential campaign, and, as his involvement in the Comey controversy demonstrates, has proved that he is willing to thrust himself into the breach and take political hits to advance the president's interests. The president has rewarded that loyalty with trust. At the Department of Justice, he now enjoys full authority over the federal law enforcement apparatus." <http://politi.co/2q87Hqq>

THE APPRENTICE IN REAL LIFE -- "Trump holds auditions while Spicer's away,"

by Tara Palmeri and Hadas Gold: "Press secretary Sean Spicer's absence from the briefing room on Wednesday comes at a tenuous time, as President Donald Trump has asked senior advisers for weeks if he needs to change the face of his administration, several White House officials and outside advisers to the president said. Trump was pleased with deputy press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders' performance on Friday, when she first filled in for Spicer on camera during the midday briefing, three White House aides said, adding that he has talked about grooming her for Spicer's more visible role. They said the press team's much-criticized handling of Trump's decision Tuesday to fire FBI Director James Comey may have further made the case to Trump that Sanders should take over the podium.

"Trump has asked senior aides for their opinions about her performance since Friday. He thought she did well again on Wednesday when she had the difficult task of taking questions about Trump's blockbuster announcement that he'd ousted Comey, one White House official said. Sanders will cover the briefings for the rest of the week, since Spicer is on Naval Reserve duty, as he was last Friday when she took the podium. Naval reservists are required to serve one weekend per month and 10 days per year." <http://politi.co/2q5fffx>

TRUMPCARE WHIPLASH -- "MacArthur endures town hall trial-by-fire," by Ryan Hutchins and Katie Jennings in Willingboro, N.J.: "At his Wednesday night town hall, Rep. Tom MacArthur, one of the chief architects of the revamped GOP Obamacare replacement plan, was called a liar. A man who said his wife had battled breast cancer stood to say MacArthur was the 'single greatest threat to my family in the entire world.' Another demanded to know whether it's 'true that rape can be considered a pre-existing condition.'

"For nearly five hours, MacArthur faced an onslaught as he spoke here at a community center in the bluest town in this South Jersey-based swing district. Dozens of protesters gathered outside, some lying on the parking lot holding signs in the shape of tombstones. Inside, the congressman was shouted down by constituents and others in the audience of 250 people. It was a prime example of the anger, confusion and raw emotion surrounding the GOP's replacement health care plan, and a glimpse at why the party's House majority suddenly seems in jeopardy in 2018." <http://politi.co/2q5VoN3>

THE JUICE...

-- **SPOTTED:** Steve Bannon at French bistro La Piquette last night in Cleveland Park ... Sarah Huckabee Sanders at Tupelo Honey in Arlington on Wednesday evening, getting dinner with her family, including husband and three kids.

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- BLOOMBERG** this morning is officially announcing the Global Business Forum, a one-day event at the Plaza Hotel in New York City this September hosted with the Alibaba Group, Dangote Industries Limited, EXOR, and the MiSK Foundation. The conference will convene global political leaders, CEOs and NGOs for conversations on global business and supporting economic prosperity.

<http://politi.co/2q8bxjH>

-- **OMB DIRECTOR MICK MULVANEY** will speak at 10:30 a.m. EST at the Light Forum at Stanford University on a panel called "What Happens Now? The Future of Healthcare Delivery." **Facebook livestream** <http://bit.ly/2r36ujo>

PLAYBOOK TRAVEL SECTION - "U.S. to Ban Laptops in All Cabins of Flights From Europe, Officials Say," by The Daily Beast's Clive Irving: "The Department of Homeland Security plans to ban laptops in the cabins of all flights from Europe to the United States, European security officials told The Daily Beast. The announcement is expected Thursday. Initially a ban on laptops and tablets was applied only to U.S.-bound flights from 10 airports in North Africa and the Middle East. The ban was based on U.S. fears that terrorists have found a way to convert laptops into bombs capable of bringing down an airplane. It is unclear if the European ban will also apply to tablets." <http://thebea.st/2q4hpMn>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Former FBI Director James Comey walks to his home in McLean, Va., on May 10. | Sait Serkan Gurbuz/AP

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Graduating seniors boo Betsy DeVos at commencement in Florida," by Jessica Bakeman in Daytona Beach, Fla.: "Hundreds of graduating seniors of a historically black university here booed and turned their backs on Education Secretary Betsy DeVos as she struggled to deliver their commencement address over the raucous crowd. 'Let's choose to hear each other out,' DeVos said, straining to be heard at Bethune-Cookman University's graduation in Daytona Beach. 'We can choose to listen, be respectful and continue to learn from each other's experience.' But most of the students at the private university remained with their backs turned as the crowd applauded. A man pumped his fist in the air while he was escorted out by security, soliciting more cheers." <http://politi.co/2pyjUDb>

MAYOR OF THE WORLD - MIKE BLOOMBERG in Bloomberg View, "After Comey, Justice Must Be Served": "If President Donald Trump thinks he can fire his way out of the FBI's investigation into his campaign's ties to Russia, he is sorely mistaken -- and attempting to do so makes him look weak and fearful, undermines the rule of law, and diminishes what little prospects there were for bipartisan legislation. ... [I]t's time for Congress to get serious about performing its constitutional duties. ... First, the Senate must insist that Trump replace Comey with an independent and experienced new director, one who will commit to completing any investigations into the president now

underway. No cranks, cronies or close relatives. ... When elected officials refuse to be bound by the ethical practices and norms that we have come to expect of them, it's up to the public -- and their representatives -- to hold them accountable."

<https://bloom.bg/2qsk6IT>

COVERS DU JOUR - TIME'S new cover, "After Hours in the White House"

<http://bit.ly/2q4Knfw> ... **ECONOMIST'S new cover -- "Trumpnomics -- What it is, and why it is dangerous"** <http://politi.co/2quLjul> ... **Transcript of their Trump interview** <http://econ.st/2pAwyl0> ... **Their editorial** <http://econ.st/2q5QFLm>

FUN CLICK - "New F.B.I.-Director Job Application," by River Clegg in The New Yorker in the "Daily Shouts" column: "Should a President's Administration be suspected of having colluded with a foreign government to fraudulently win an election, the proper response by the F.B.I. would be to: a) Delay any investigation until the President has left office, thereby assuring smooth executive governance. b) Ask the President if this is true; accept the answer unquestioningly. c) Watch a little 'Fox & Friends' before making any big decisions. d) Such a scenario would not occur." <http://bit.ly/2r2hIEU>

***** **A message from PhRMA: You don't always pay full price for doctor or hospital visits. So why is a visit to the pharmacy different?** Robust negotiations between biopharmaceutical companies and insurers often result in significant rebates and discounts. In fact, more than a third of the list price for brand medicines is rebated back to payers and the supply chain. Yet, unlike care received at an in-network hospital or physician's office, patients with high deductibles or coinsurance pay cost sharing based on the list price of a medicine, even if their insurer receives a steep discount. Insurers should share more of the rebates they receive with patients. Learn more at <http://onphr.ma/2pdaE7m>. *****

SNEAK PEEK - SUSAN DOMINUS writes the cover of this Sunday's N.Y. Times Magazine, "Is an Open Marriage a Happier Marriage? What the experiences of nonmonogamous couples can tell us about jealousy, love, desire and trust" - Dominus spent a better part of a year on the story: "Open marriages - and to a lesser degree open but nonmarital committed relationships - are still considered so taboo that many of the people I interviewed over the last year resisted giving their names, for fear not just of social approbation but also of jeopardizing their jobs. It is no surprise that conservatives would perceive the concept as a degradation of marriage, of a key foundation of society. But even among progressives, the subject typically provoked, I found, a curled lip or a slack jaw. The thought bubble, or expressed thought: How? How could any married person be comfortable with, or encouraging of, a spouse's extramarital sex?" <http://nyti.ms/2q3U65K> ... **The cover** <http://politi.co/2q6LMA4>

VALLEY TALK - "Snapchat Co-Founders Take \$2.4 Billion Hit on Earnings Miss," by Bloomberg's Justin Villamil and Jack Witzig: "Snap Inc. co-founders Evan Spiegel and Bobby Murphy lost more than \$1 billion each after the company reported earnings for the first time Wednesday afternoon. Shares fell 25 percent ... before rebounding slightly when the social media company reported first-quarter revenue that was below

analyst estimates. Snap said its Snapchat app added fewer users than projected and the business is struggling to expand its audience as Facebook Inc. copies its most popular features." <https://bloom.bg/2q4ewLC>

POLITICO "PULSE CHECK" podcast - JON FAVREAU, the ex-Obama speechwriter-turned-Crooked Media cofounder tells POLITICO's Dan Diamond that he now thinks differently about media coverage of issues like the health care debate. "I have a greater appreciation for journalists," Favreau allowed. "When we were in the White House, we would always say, OK, we can't let ourselves get stuck in the Washington media cycle ... We can't just wake up worried about what's on 'Morning Joe' and what's in the tipsheets ... [But] when you're in media ... and you need stuff to talk about, I can see now how easy it is to fall into the trap of only being reactive." ***Listen to the podcast*** <http://bit.ly/2quLSVI>

Playbookers

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY to Robert Allbritton and Dr. Elena Allbritton ... Blake Hounshell and Sandy Choi.

TRANSITIONS -- Ally Letsky, previously direct mail director for the Hillary campaign, has been hired by Berlin Rosen as a VP in its DC office. <http://bit.ly/2pliOPL> ... **Elka Looks** starts next week on the Facebook Messenger team doing communications for business and platforms. She previously did communications at Medium.

OBAMA ALUMNI -- Nate Yohannes is moving to San Francisco to be a director of strategy and business development at Microsoft. He previously was senior advisor to the head of the Office of Investment and Innovation for President Obama.

OUT AND ABOUT - POOL REPORT from a Bush Center event in Dallas last night: A "working group was convened to discuss a new Bush Institute-led project to reaffirm the core American principles of political democracy and free markets, with a special focus on younger Americans. The bipartisan group discussed why the liberal democratic order is at risk and why faith in democracy is waning -- and what, practically, what we can do about it. President and Mrs. Bush hosted the group for a working dinner following the roundtable. The details of the program will be rolled out at a conference in NYC in October." **SPOTTED:** Madeleine Albright, Carlos Gutierrez, Elliott Abrams, Mike Abramowitz, William Galston, Tom Melia, Pete Gehner, Holly Kuzmich, Amanda Schnetzer and others.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Brandon Arnold, EVP at the National Taxpayers Union and a Playbook Power List honoree, and **Robin Arnold**, a CPA for a company in Baltimore, welcomed their second child to the world on Tuesday. Soon-to-be-named

Baby Boy Arnold arrived on Tuesday at 11:06 am. He weighed in at 8lbs 12oz and measured 22 inches. "A lot of people have already dubbed him a member of the New Guard," Arnold wrote in. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2r2X8Fq>

--**Gareth Lacy**, deputy press secretary for California Gov. Jerry Brown, and **Erin Lacy**, alum of California Department of Public Health, have welcomed Wyatt Anderson Lacy was born on Tuesday in Roseville, California, at a healthy 9 lbs 2 oz. His big sister, Beatrix, is very excited to meet him. **Pics** <http://politi.co/2qUmzM8> ... <http://politi.co/2qUhYtt>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Fara Klein, manager of state government affairs at National Community Pharmacists Association, turned 29 (hat tip: Elizabeth Rojas Levi)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Former Tennessee Rep. Harold Ford Jr., professor at the University of Michigan School of Public Policy, is 47 - he's celebrating with his "wife, Georgia (my 3 year old daughter) and Lovey (my 2 year old son whose actual name is Harold) over a big lunch right before they nap." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2q5pCjP>

BIRTHDAYS: Brian J. Walsh, partner at Rokk Solutions (h/t Ron Bonjean) ... DHS secretary John Kelly is 67 ... David Castagnetti ... Jamie Horowitz, president of Fox Sports National Networks ... Katherine Vargas ... Nicole Landset Blank, partner at Walsworth Landset Research and DCCC alum ... Karen Skelton (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Rep. David Young (R-Iowa) is 49 ... GMMB's Danny Jester, the pride of Bridgeville, Delaware (h/t Jack Smith) ... Theodore "Teddy" Braver Penn (h/ts Bob and Rita) ... Lauren Hernandez ... Brandon Lorenz, comms. campaign director at the Human Rights Campaign ... Jo Ling Kent, NBC News correspondent, alum of Fox Biz and CNN, married to Scott Conroy (h/t Ben Chang) ... Time's Olivia Waxman ... Sam Mulopulos, LA for Sen. Rob Portman, is 25 ... Bethany Little ... Jess Maher ... Angie Alfonso-Royals ... José Cunningham, chairman of the DC Republican Party, celebrating at the RNC Spring meeting at the Del Coronado in San Diego (h/t Patrick Mara) ...

... **Rich Bamberger**, managing director at Kivvit (h/t Josh Dawsey) ... Logan Gibson, lead associate at Booz Allen Hamilton and Jim Webb alum ... journalist Jeremy Paxman ... Travis Lumpkin, COS for Sen. Cantwell (h/t Michael Meehan) ... Alex Dease, press assistant for Majority Whip Scalise, is 22 (h/t Lauren Fine) ... Larry Thomas ... Chris Landberg, a career Foreign Service Officer currently in charge of the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement section at the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá, is 5-0, celebrating with a big embassy party being planned by his wife, Amanda ... Garrette Turner ... Pam Eichenbaum ... John Weinfurter ... Alex Cahill ... Marissa Astor ... Shauna Daly, cofounder and executive director of Progressive Security Corps ... Alex Wagner, former COS to the Secretary of the Army ... Alicia Thornberry ... Carla McDonald, spending her day salsa dancing (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... George Hadijski ... Gannet Tseggai ... Adam Fromm ... WTOP's Michael Jakaitis ... Matt Hu-Stiles ... Doug Graham ... political consultant Michael Arno ... Will Hart ... Alexander Powers ... Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan is 84 (h/t AP)

***** **A message from PhRMA: Insurers should share more of the rebates they receive with patients.** More than a third of the list price for brand medicines is rebated back to payers and the supply chain. Yet, unlike care received at an in-network hospital or physician's office, patients with high deductibles or coinsurance pay cost sharing based on the list price of a medicine, even if their insurer receives a steep discount. Patients share the costs of medicines, so they should share the savings. Learn more about where the discounts are going at <http://onphr.ma/2pdaE7m>. *****

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To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 10/18/2017 8:11:32 PM
Subject: We need Definers' clipping service down now.

We've been working on this since June and was told there was a deadline to make it happen in September. Let me know if I need Ryan Jackson to call someone.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Wed 6/14/2017 9:45:39 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: Ethanol waiver battle royale set for today — EPA seeks two-year halt of methane rule — LNG exporters keep an eye on Qatar

By Anthony Adragna | 06/14/2017 05:43 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff, Darius Dixon, Alex Guillén, Nick Juliano and Annie Snider

E15 DAY! The ethanol community has been looking forward to today with heady anticipation, as one of their most prized policy goals will get a day in the Senate spotlight: Sen. Deb Fischer's bill that would expand sales of 15 percent ethanol will get a hearing before the EPW Committee. The hearing is part of a deal, which also includes a committee vote, struck between Fischer and Chairman John Barrasso in order to win corn-state senators' support for an (ultimately unsuccessful) resolution to strike down an Obama-era rule limiting methane emissions.

Here's what will happen: Ethanol issues cut across party lines, so the usual partisan bickering will likely be absent. Instead, expect support from corn-staters on both sides of the aisle like Fischer, Joni Ernst and Tammy Duckworth and skepticism from both fossil fuel defenders and environmentalists. The panel is as good an indication as any: Brooke Coleman, who leads the Advanced Biofuels Business Council, will join Mike Lorenz, executive vice president for Sheetz, the leading E15 retailer, in facing off with Todd Teske, who runs small engine maker Briggs and Stratton, and Jonathan Lewis, senior counsel for the Clean Air Task Force. Scientific input will be provided by Janet Yanowitz, a consultant at EcoEngineering who has worked with NREL scientists on studies, though at least a couple of them were commissioned by the Renewable Fuels Association.

If you go: Senators kick off the hearing at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 406.

Volumes imminent? As if an E15 hearing wasn't enough excitement, ME has been hearing rumblings that EPA will issue a proposed rule setting the amount of ethanol required to be in the fuel system this week. No date is set.

KICKING THE CAN ON CATCHING METHANE LEAKS: Undeterred by litigation seeking to block even an initial 90-day stay of the Obama-era regulations, EPA proposed Tuesday a two-year pause on key methane leak detection and repair requirements for new oil and gas wells, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. The agency must now go through the formal rulemaking process and will accept public comment for 30 days on its proposal. Its final decision will without a doubt be challenged in court. Link to the proposal here.

EPA estimated that companies subject to the rule would save at least \$172 million, but acknowledged that would come at the expense of "associated climate and human health benefits" that would not materialize. The Trump administration said it did not have a dollar figure available for those lost health benefits over the next two years. Under the Obama administration, EPA estimated the methane rule would lead to "monetized benefits" of about \$360 million in 2020, although it said that figure did not account for all benefits of reduced emissions and could

vary widely based on modeling assumptions.

Environmentalists assailed the proposed delay. "Just the other week, Pruitt himself noted the threat posed by methane pollution, but he's purposefully allowing people across the country to suffer from it," Sierra Club Chief Climate Counsel Joanne Spalding said in a statement. "This isn't simply mean-spirited, it's a deliberate attempt to benefit the oil and gas industry at the expense of our public health."

WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and House Science's Kristina Baum was first to identify Hawaii as the state that's gone longest without a Republican senator. For today: Who was the last sitting president to testify before Congress? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

HIDDEN U.S. ENERGY OPPORTUNITY? The ongoing dispute between Qatar — the world's top LNG producer — and some of its neighbors may ultimately offer an opportunity for U.S. exporters of liquefied natural gas to expand their market share, Pro's Ben Lefebvre [reports](#). "I don't think the administration intended to impact U.S. LNG by giving the Saudis more of a green light when it comes to Qatar," David Goldwyn, a former State Department energy staffer, said. "But now that you add this geopolitical risk, that will help those looking to sell commitments later." While the U.S. exports a relatively tiny amount of LNG today, it is on track to become one of the world's largest suppliers in just a few years.

In other LNG news, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has been pushing European Union officials to reject a new Russian natural gas pipeline in favor of U.S. liquefied natural gas supplies, he told Senators at a budget hearing Tuesday. Pro's Eric Wolff [has more](#).

RESPECTFUL DISAGREEMENT: Tillerson told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at an earlier hearing Tuesday that his view the U.S. should stick with the Paris climate agreement "didn't change" but said he respected Trump's decision to abandon the pact. "My views were heard out," he said in response to a question from ranking member [Ben Cardin](#). "I respect that the president heard my views, but I respect the decision he's taken."

QUOTABLE TRUMP: "Your island has been there for hundreds of years, and I believe your island will be there for hundreds more," President Donald Trump to Tangier Island Mayor James "Ooker" Eskridge, downplaying the threat climate change and erosion pose to the Virginia community, according to [Delmarva Now](#), which points out the island is losing up to 16 feet of land per year. The New York Times observed last year that the island's residents are in danger of [becoming](#) "some of the first climate-change refugees in the continental United States" within the next half-century.

APPROPRIATORS MOVING WITH STATUS QUO: Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) said Tuesday afternoon that he has instructed appropriators to rely on spending limits from fiscal 2017 as they write their bills for 2018, our budget colleague Sarah Ferris [reports](#). "[W]e hope to move forward with some of the appropriations bills at last year's levels, and then adjust them once we can reach a bipartisan agreement on how much we're going to spend," he

told reporters. McConnell appears to be laying the groundwork for a continuing resolution, which many Republicans already anticipate.

Halfway through June, appropriators in the House still don't know how big a slice of the taxpayer pie they're going to get, and there's no telling how soon the Budget Committee will get them a number. That, along with the lack of nominees from the Trump administration, is slowing the process, according to energy and water appropriations cardinal [Mike Simpson](#). "The problem is you could have a hearing on environmental management. Uh oh! They don't have an [assistant] secretary for environmental management... That makes it all kinda tough," Simpson told ME. The Idaho Republican's subcommittee has scheduled a budget hearing next Tuesday with Energy Secretary Rick Perry, the only Senate-confirmed Trump official at the Energy Department.

NUCLEAR, OZONE, BROWNFIELD BILLS LINED UP FOR ACTION: Rep. [John Shimkus](#) has queued up three bills for his environment panel of the House Energy and Commerce Committee to vote on Thursday, including the Illinois Republican's legislation to rewrite the nation's nuclear waste policy. The Nuclear Waste Policy Act hasn't been amended in 30 years, when Yucca Mountain was picked to be the sole waste repository, and Shimkus' bill first had a hearing seven weeks ago. The [draft version](#) of the bill includes sections on interim storage sites, payments to the host state and limits work on any defense waste-only repository but keeps the focus on completing Yucca's licensing process. Shimkus included a few Nevada-friendly provisions, but it's largely been a nonstarter with the state's congressional delegation.

The committee will also vote on H.R. 806, the [Ozone Standards Implementation Act](#), which would delay through 2025 implementation of the 2015 ozone standard, stretch the regular air quality standard review period from five years to ten, and adds new technology and economic considerations for future standards. The House passed a similar bill last year. Lawmakers will also take up a bill making changes to EPA's brownfields program, which redevelops abandoned factories, gas stations and other facilities. The changes include allowing grants to be used for multiple purposes and bumping grant limits from \$200,000 to \$500,000, although Democrats have been pushing to increase overall appropriations to the program. The markup is set for 10 a.m. Thursday in Rayburn 2123.

PARTY, INTERRUPTED: Environmental activists opposed to new pipelines in Virginia interrupted Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam's victory party after he [defeated](#) former Rep. Tom Perriello for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination, according to [video](#) posted by NBC4's Julie Carey. National green groups heavily favored Perriello in the primary. On the Republican side, former RNC Chairman Ed Gillespie survived a shockingly close call to claim the GOP gubernatorial nomination.

REPUBLICANS URGE OVERSIGHT RESPONSIVENESS: Lest it be lost in Tuesday's EPW consideration of four nominees, Barrasso reiterated the expectation that federal agencies respond to oversight requests from all committee members. "I'm going to work to ensure that the executive branch agencies under the current administration work diligently and expeditiously to respond to the committee's reasonable oversight requests," Barrasso said. But he argued EPA has actually been quite responsive to date, answering 386 of the 416 letters received.

Crunching the numbers: EPA told ME it had responded to 11 of the letters sent by ranking member [Tom Carper](#) so far seeking responses. Carper's staff, though, contends they've had just six adequate responses — highlighting [one letter](#) that consisted only of press releases and other public documents as an example of non-responsive correspondence — to the 17 Carper-led letters they've sent so far.

It's not just senators though: House Resources Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) told reporters "obviously" federal agencies should respond to members of both parties, though he — like Barrasso during the hearing — noted the Obama administration frequently provided slow or inadequate responses. "I would hope members of parties would be responsible enough that it's not a fishing expedition," Bishop said. "There is a better way of interacting between administrations and the legislative body."

TIRED OF WAITING: Senior Republicans are increasingly concerned the president's slow pace of filling energy and environmental posts may impede his ability to enact his agenda. Barrasso told ME in particular he'd like to see Trump nominate officials to run the Fish & Wildlife Service, BLM and National Park Service. "I would like see more names coming out," Barrasso said.

ANY TIME TO STOP FOR LOBSTER? Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is in Maine today and tomorrow where he'll tour the controversial Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument by car, foot, and canoe. That's one of nearly two dozen national monuments designations the Trump administration is reviewing. A number of Republicans in the state, led by Gov. Paul LePage, are calling for the Obama-era designation to be undone.

As Zinke heads to Maine, the League of Conservation Voters and a group of Democratic lawmakers will announce a new campaign aimed at defending public lands from congressional and executive branch actions. Participants in the noon press conference in the House Triangle are Sens. [Martin Heinrich](#) and [Brian Schatz](#), as well as Reps. [Earl Blumenauer](#), [Salud Carbajal](#), [Judy Chu](#), [Raúl Grijalva](#), [Donald McEachin](#), [Tom O'Halleran](#) and [Raul Ruiz](#).

REPORT: HOW POWER PRODUCERS STACK UP ON EMISSIONS: CERES is out with [a report](#) this morning analyzing air emissions of the 100 largest U.S. electric power producers. Among its findings: Power plant sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide emissions in 2015 were 87 percent and 79 percent lower, respectively, than in 1990 and carbon dioxide emissions from the power sector have declined 20 percent between 2005 and 2015.

ANOTHER TITLE FOR BROWN: California Gov. Jerry Brown has been named special adviser for states and regions for this year's U.N. climate conference in Fiji. "California is proud to partner with Fiji, an island nation that is experiencing firsthand the impacts of climate change," he said in a statement.

CRAMER'S WORRY AFTER PARIS PULLOUT: Rep. [Kevin Cramer](#) told ME he did worry some U.S. companies — coal giants, GE and Microsoft, in particular — would face some blowback for the U.S. pulling out of the Paris agreement. "When you have big companies in a

global market, it's good for them to feel the support of the government," he said. "Not being at the accord makes it more difficult." Cramer said he understood the president's decision to pull out, citing potential legal risks compelling the U.S. to regulate emissions domestically, but also thought the U.S. could successfully negotiate its way back into the pact.

MORE CRIMINAL CHARGES IN FLINT WATER DISASTER: Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette has scheduled a press conference for this morning, with local press reporting that more criminal charges for "names that will be recognized" are in the works. So far, Schuette — who is widely expected to enter the 2018 gubernatorial race this summer — has charged 13 individuals in the crisis that exposed the city's 100,000 residents to unsafe levels of lead, including two former emergency managers.

MAIL CALL! DEETS SOUGHT ON MONUMENT REVIEW: Grijalva sent a letter to Zinke Tuesday seeking information on his travel itinerary and meeting schedule on recent trips to national monuments currently under review. He also asked Zinke to provide a tally and summary of public comments received to date.

MOVERS, SHAKERS: The Edison Electric Institute announced Tuesday PNM Resources' Pat Vincent-Collawn will serve as chairman of the board; Exelon's Chris Crane, Berkshire Hathaway Energy's Greg Abel and Duke Energy's Lynn Good will be vice chairmen. It also announced Phil Moeller, former FERC commissioner, will be promoted from senior vice president to executive vice president.

QUICK HITS

- Global demand for coal falls in 2016 for second year in a row. The Guardian.
- Keystone XL pipeline would imperil whooping cranes, natural resources, experts for Sierra Club and Bold Nebraska say. Omaha World-Herald.
- The first new US coal mine of the Trump era will employ fewer people than an average supermarket. Quartz.
- U.S. will have to work with others to deny North Korea fuel supplies -Tillerson. Reuters.
- Oil Slips as Industry Said to Report Surprise U.S. Supply Build. Bloomberg.
- EPA Research Office Deputizes House Science Committee Aide. Bloomberg BNA.

HAPPENING TODAY

10:00 a.m. — "States' Perspectives on Energy Security Planning, Emergency Preparedness, and State Energy Programs," House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, 2123 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — "Legislative Hearing on S. 517, the Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — Legislative hearing on "Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act," House Natural Resources Federal Lands Subcommittee, 1324 Longworth

12:00 p.m. — League of Conservation Voters and a group of Democratic lawmakers hold press conference on public lands, House Triangle

2:00 p.m. — Subcommittee legislative hearing to receive testimony on various bills, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power, 366 Dirksen

2:30 p.m. — Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on the National Nuclear Security Administration, 138 Dirksen

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/ethanol-waiver-battle-royale-set-for-today-023292>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Senate fails to overturn Obama-era methane rule [Back](#)

By Nick Juliano, Darius Dixon and Ben Lefebvre | 05/10/2017 12:12 PM EDT

Republicans' last chance to block an Obama-era energy rule may have just evaporated into thin air.

The Senate on Wednesday unexpectedly failed to advance a filibuster-proof resolution that would have allowed them to prevent the Interior Department from cracking down on the amount of methane oil and gas companies release from their wells and pipelines. Three Republicans — [John McCain](#), [Lindsey Graham](#) and [Susan Collins](#) — joined all Democrats in blocking the resolution.

Had the vote succeeded, it would have been the 15th time this year that lawmakers deployed the Congressional Review Act to help President Donald Trump erase his predecessor's late-term regulations. The CRA, which had only been used once before this year, gives Congress a short amount of time to block rules completed since about the middle of last year, but that clock runs out on Thursday

The methane resolution narrowly passed the House last February, but [John Barrasso](#), who sponsored the Senate companion, had been unable to round up the votes he needed from his colleagues. It was the only such measure to come to a vote and fail, although Republicans targeted numerous other Obama rules with CRA resolutions that never made it to the floor of either chamber.

For now, the Bureau of Land Management's methane rule remains in place, but Trump has directed his administration to consider repealing it.

"It's disappointing but I'm going to call on the secretary of Interior to withdraw the rule immediately," Barrasso said after the vote.

While Collins and Graham had announced their opposition weeks ago, McCain's vote came as a surprise. Other closely watched GOP moderates, including Jeff Flake (Ariz.) and Dean Heller (Nev.), who are up for reelection next year, backed the resolution. But there was no aisle-crossing from Democrats facing tough races in energy-producing states, such as Heidi Heitkamp and Joe Manchin.

In a statement, McCain said he voted no over concerns that Interior would not be able to rewrite a new version of the rule.

"While I am concerned that the BLM rule may be onerous, passage of the resolution would have prevented the federal government, under any administration, from issuing a rule that is 'similar,' according to the plain reading of the Congressional Review Act," he said.

McCain, who labelled methane emissions an "important public health and air quality issue," called on Interior to "revise and improve the BLM methane rule."

John Hoeven, who had been helping whip votes for the measure, said McCain had told Barrasso Tuesday night that he had concerns with the resolution. But Hoeven said they took a chance, hoping that some undecided Democrats would join them in voting for it.

"We had to go because May 11 — that's the last day we could do it. So, we had to go. ... And we had some Ds that were undecided so we thought we might still get it," Hoeven told reporters after the vote.

Tom Carper, the top Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee, said he was not completely surprised by McCain's maverick vote.

"I think the Republican leader was looking at that time running out on the ability to bring up the CRAs and decided to roll the dice," Carper said. "I applaud those who saw the issues as we did and voted with us."

The methane rule adjusts how the government collects royalties for oil and gas extracted from public land to prevent drilling companies from wasting excess gas by flaring it off or venting methane straight into the atmosphere. Environmentalists and other rule supporters say the rule helps limit emissions of a powerful greenhouse gas and ensures taxpayers get a fair return for oil and gas extracted from public lands, though the energy industry argued that collecting the gas increases costs and could impede oil production.

"While it is disappointing that the Senate did not act to correct the rule more quickly, we look forward to working with the administration on policies that continue our commitment to safely

produce the energy that Americans rely on, help consumers, create jobs, strengthen our national security, and protect our environment," said Erik Milito, of the American Petroleum Institute.

Democrats were elated at the resolution's failure.

"Today's vote is a win for American taxpayers, a win for public health and a win for our climate," Ed Markey (D-Mass.) said in a statement. "When it comes to natural gas production on public lands, the oil industry should embrace the slogan 'waste not, want not.' These commonsense rules issued by the Obama administration ensure that we can reduce methane emissions that contribute to climate change and ensure that taxpayers receive their fair share for their precious natural resources."

The Sierra Club and other green groups said they had been surprised by McCain's vote though they had been lobbying the Arizona senator as part of its campaign against the CRA in western states.

"We had high hopes on McCain, given his past history of action on climate change," said Lena Moffitt, director of the group's Dirty Fuels campaign. "But he remained mum" on his vote.

The resolution was briefly hung-up this month by requests from corn-state Republicans for help securing an EPA waiver that would benefit sales of higher-blend ethanol in exchange for their support. But John Thune (R-S.D.) said those lawmakers relented after receiving assurances from leadership.

While the result was disappointing for the oil industry, one lobbyist took solace in the diminished likelihood of an ethanol deal taking shape.

"Looks like we won't have to do the [ethanol waiver] circus at EPW after all," said Stephen Brown, with refining company Tesoro.

Rob Portman, (R-Ohio) another longstanding holdout, surprisingly announced his support for the resolution on Monday, after Secretary Ryan Zinke sent him a letter promising to look for ways to limit methane emissions that would not have as large of an economic impact on the industry. But experts said that reassurance rested on shaky ground given the untested nature of the Congressional Review Act's prohibition on re-issuing regulations that are overturned.

First enacted in 1996, the CRA had been used just once before this year, to block a Clinton-era ergonomics rule in the first year of George W. Bush's presidency. The law prevents agencies from writing new rules that are "substantially the same" as those Congress overturns, but courts have never tested those limits nor weighed in on how to address a conflicting law telling an agency to write a rule Congress has blocked.

While Congress managed to block 14 Obama regulations so far this year, Democrats took solace in the fact that their last attempt came up short.

Carper plans to thank McCain the next time he sees him.

"He and I served in the Vietnam War together — both Navy veterans," Carper said. "When I see him I'll give him a hug. If not that, a salute."

Alex Guillen, Eric Wolff and Esther Whieldon contributed to this report.

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EPA to reconsider more provisions of oil and gas well emissions rule [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 05/31/2017 11:55 AM EDT

EPA today placed a 90-day stay on several additional portions of its 2016 rule setting methane emissions limits for new oil and gas industry sources.

The delay is needed as the agency considers several petitions to reconsider parts of the regulation, EPA said. The agency [in April stayed](#) some other portions of the rule, including fugitive emissions requirements, but today's announcement covers other key parts of the regulation.

Two more parts of the rule EPA will now reconsider are standards for well site pneumatic pumps and requirements for closed vent systems to be certified by a professional engineer, according to a [Federal Register notice](#) signed by Administrator Scott Pruitt on Friday and running soon.

Those requirements will be placed on hold for 90 days while EPA reviews them, and the agency "intends to look broadly at the entire 2016 Rule," not just the specific portions already identified, according to the notice.

EPA will have to take public comment on any proposed changes to the rule before finalizing them, and could subsequently face litigation.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA will issue proposed changes to the rule's requirements and take public comment.

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EPA proposes two-year delay of oil, gas methane rule [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/13/2017 06:27 PM EDT

EPA today proposed a two-year pause on key methane leak detection and repair requirements for new oil and gas wells, saying it needs the time to reconsider the Obama-era rule.

The Trump administration last month issued a 90-day stay, but EPA has to go through a rulemaking process to finalize the two-year delay. The agency will take public comment for 30 days once the proposal is published in the Federal Register.

The delay also pushes back a provision on pneumatic pumps, as well as a requirement that professional engineers certify closed vent systems. EPA said last month that it also intends to review the rule more broadly than just those requirements.

Environmental groups last week sued over the initial 90-day stay and asked a court to lift it immediately. EPA's response to that request is due June 15.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA will take public comment on its proposed two-year delay before issuing a final decision that is likely to be challenged in court.

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Trump-fanned flames in Middle East may open door for U.S. gas exports [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/13/2017 06:13 PM EDT

President Donald Trump's unorthodox approach to Middle East policy is exacerbating tensions across the region and increasing nervousness in global energy markets — but it could ultimately prove to be a boon for U.S. exporters of liquefied natural gas.

The ongoing dispute between Qatar — the world's top LNG producer — and some of its neighbors is being watched closely by U.S. companies eager to expand their global market share. Trump publicly accused the small nation of supporting terrorism and appears to be siding with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and other countries in the region that cut off diplomatic relations with Qatar earlier this month.

Already, the market is starting to feel the effects. Qatari LNG shipping costs are starting to rise because Saudi Arabia is no longer allowing access to its docks, sources said. The United Arab Emirates also turned away a Qatari LNG vessel, forcing it to divert its cargo elsewhere. Gas prices in the UK, where much of the gas is supplied by Qatar, also spiked last week when tensions first flared up.

David Goldwyn, who worked on international energy issues at the State Department from 2009 to 2011, says the conflict shows the Trump administration should "be more forward-looking and nuanced in diplomacy rather than giving carte blanche to some of our allies." But it also may inadvertently help U.S. energy companies hone their sales pitch, he said.

"I don't think the administration intended to impact U.S. LNG by giving the Saudis more of a green light when it comes to Qatar," said Goldwyn, the president of Goldwyn Global Strategies consulting firm. "But now that you add this geopolitical risk, that will help those looking to sell commitments later."

Qatar's state-owned companies RasGas and Qatargas produce up to 77 million metric tons a year of the super-cooled gas, roughly a third of the world's total.

While the U.S. exports a relatively tiny amount of LNG today, it is on track to become one of the world's largest suppliers in just a few years. Cheniere Energy, Freeport LNG and other export projects are on the path to grow U.S. LNG export capacity to 64 metric tons a year by 2020, industry analysts have said.

Companies are not exactly using the current Middle East crisis in their advertisements, but they are quick to tout the relative stability of supply soon to come out of the U.S.

"The Qatar situation certainly brings up the delicate situations that are involved in doing business over there in the Middle East Region. ... But this conflict provides opportunity for the United States in exporting our natural gas. We are a neutral nation," Continental Resources CEO Harold Hamm, who advised Trump's presidential campaign, said on CNBC Monday. "Other countries like China or other Qatar customers would not have to worry about anything if they wanted to import U.S. LNG."

Further clouding the matter for the LNG sector are the mixed signals coming from the White House. In contrast to Trump's tweets, his State Department — led by Rex Tillerson, who as former head of Exxon Mobil helped Qatargas expand its Ras Laffan LNG export terminal — has called for both sides to calm down.

The resulting confusion has led some in the market wondering what, if any, long-term impacts the imbroglio may have. The Center for Liquefied Natural Gas, a trade association, plans to meet in Houston on Thursday, partly to hash out a response to the Qatar situation, said Charlie Riedl, the center's executive director.

To be sure, the Trump administration is introducing uncertainty to the U.S. LNG market with other policy moves as well. The president has repeatedly said he would renegotiate NAFTA and other free-trade agreements, which could complicate new LNG export projects getting the necessary trade permits from the Department of Energy.

"Currently, producers tell me one of their biggest challenges is uncertainty about the administration's plans for trade policy," Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-Texas) said. "Producers are hesitant to invest in expansion and growth until that is resolved."

But for now, Japan and other countries heavily dependent on imported gas may decide that privately owned U.S. LNG suppliers offer more security than a Middle Eastern government that can be thrown into upheaval partly from a presidential tweet, analysts said.

"The buyers have been doing that anyway," Meg Gentle, chief executive of LNG export startup Tellurian, told POLITICO. "But it would reinforce how important this is. This has introduced an additional element of uncertainty, and uncertainty of supply from one of the world's largest producers is never a good thing."

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Tillerson: U.S. lobbying Europe to choose U.S. gas over Russian pipeline [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 06/13/2017 05:13 PM EDT

The U.S. is urging the European Union to reject a new Russian natural gas pipeline in favor of U.S. liquefied natural gas supplies, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told Senate appropriators today.

"We've suggested to them it's not in their national security interest to become more dependent on Russia," he said. "We are promoting the notion that Europe needs to think about their energy security and how dependent they are on those supply lines."

Europe should instead consider increasing its U.S. purchases to diversify their energy supply, he said.

Russia is aiming to expand its reach into Europe's energy markets with the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, a project that has pitted project supporter Germany against Poland, the Baltic states and others that fear it would increase the bloc's dependence on Russia's Gazprom, which already supplies about one-third of its gas, and that it would hurt Ukraine.

The Obama administration had used its influence to delay final decisions that would allow construction of the pipeline.

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McConnell: Senate to go ahead with spending bills at 'last year's levels' [Back](#)

By Sarah Ferris | 06/13/2017 04:29 PM EDT

Still awaiting a budget blueprint, Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) said this afternoon that he has instructed appropriators to temporarily rely on spending limits from fiscal 2017 as they write new bills.

McConnell's comments appear to be laying the groundwork for a continuing resolution that would extend the fiscal 2017 package, as many Republicans already anticipate. But the Kentucky Republican also said he hoped to reach a deal with Democrats to set new spending levels "sooner rather than later."

"In the meanwhile, we hope to move forward with some of the appropriations bills at last year's levels, and then adjust them once we can reach a bipartisan agreement on how much we're going to spend," McConnell told reporters, weighing in for the first time on this year's disjointed spending cycle.

Any Senate budget deal for fiscal 2018 would need to address the looming spending cuts under sequestration, which are set to take effect in September, though McConnell did not specifically mention the caps.

Without congressional action, this fall's budget caps would force lawmakers to cut about \$3 billion from domestic spending and \$2 billion from defense spending, according to GOP appropriators. Domestic spending would be capped at \$516 billion and defense spending would be capped at \$549 billion — levels both parties have protested.

Appropriators in both the House and the Senate have told POLITICO they have begun writing their fiscal 2018 bills to those Budget Control Act limits because they received no other direction from leadership.

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Gillespie and Northam win Virginia gubernatorial primaries [Back](#)

By Kevin Robillard and Scott Bland | 06/13/2017 06:20 PM EDT

Ed Gillespie narrowly held off a shockingly stiff challenge from Prince William County Supervisor Corey Stewart in Virginia's GOP gubernatorial primary, highlighting the continued appeal of President Donald Trump to Republican primary voters, while Democratic Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam won his party's nomination comfortably against former Rep. Tom Perriello.

Northam had 57 percent of the Democratic vote to Perriello's 43 percent when the Associated Press called the race after 8 p.m. Perriello congratulated his one-time rival on Twitter and nodded to both of their anti-Trump campaigns, writing: "Let's go win this thing—united. Let's take back the [state] House and ensure VA remains a firewall against hate."

And Northam pledged to stand up to President Donald Trump's "hate" in his victory speech, telling a cheering crowd, "I'm a fighter."

Meanwhile, the Republican primary went late into the evening, even though public polling had shown Gillespie, a former Republican National Committee chairman, crushing Stewart, an anti-illegal immigration crusader who had served as Trump's Virginia campaign chairman. Gillespie had 43.7 percent of the GOP primary vote to 42.6 percent for Stewart with 99 percent of precincts reporting.

The final margin would have to be less than 1 percentage point for Stewart to ask for a recount, according to the [Virginia Department of Elections](#).

Gillespie nodded at the unexpectedly close result when he spoke to supporters late Tuesday night. "Obviously we did not waste a penny, any more than we needed to win this nomination," he said.

"If you supported someone else during this primary contest, I would be honored to have your support because the stakes facing Virginia are too high," Gillespie wrote in an email to supporters.

Northam will start the general election as the favorite, with early polls showing giving him a double-digit lead over Gillespie. And Republicans may face presidential-level headwinds in the general election. Trump's approval ratings have been in the 30s in Virginia for months, and he lost the state to Hillary Clinton in 2016 even while winning the presidency.

A record-breaking 542,000 voters cast ballots in the Democratic primary, while about 365,000 voted in the Republican primary that was expected to be a sleepy affair.

Stewart did everything he could to spark the GOP primary, attacking Gillespie as soft on immigration, not friendly enough with Trump and insufficiently opposed to abortion rights — and loudly opposing the removal of Confederate monuments. Gillespie avoided red meat during the primary campaign, instead promising tax cuts, attacking Gov. Terry McAuliffe's stewardship of the economy and emphasizing he would be a governor for "all Virginians" as he campaigned with an eye on the general election.

Gillespie led in the state's major population centers: the Richmond metro area, Hampton Roads and the D.C. suburbs in Northern Virginia. Stewart led throughout the state's rural areas, capturing about half of the vote. State Sen. Frank Wagner, however, did well in his home region of Hampton Roads, drawing the support of establishment Republicans there and picking up about a third of the vote.

Stewart's performance was already causing alarm among Republican operatives. Tim Miller, who served as Jeb Bush's communications director, wrote on Twitter that Stewart's success was "a wake up call to establishment GOP types who think Trump is a Black Swan."

It's an "incredible reminder of the outsized influence Trump holds over Republican primary voters," said another Republican strategist, who noted that several "Never Trump" Republicans in Congress should now be on high alert ahead of next year's primaries.

Stewart's campaign was often intentionally provocative, and he chose the Confederate monuments fight as a way to generate earned media attention and make up for Gillespie's massive advantage in television advertising. The TV ads he did run featured him embracing the president, and accusing Gillespie of failing to support him. He dubbed the former lobbyist and longtime campaign operative "Establishment Ed," a trick he said borrowed directly from Trump's "Lil' Marco" and "Lyin' Ted" nicknames for his opponents.

"I was similar to Trump well before I joined his campaign," Stewart told POLITICO in a May interview. "I've always been very bold, some would say brash. I've always said very edgy, controversial statements. And it's part of the campaign strategy to attract media attention. I've done that forever."

Gillespie largely chose to ignore Stewart in the final weeks of the campaign, and didn't attend debates during the final weeks of the race. That left Stewart free to rail against him, the media and Perriello and Northam.

Northam had secured the support of the Virginia's Democratic establishment months before Perriello entered the contest in January. Gov. Terry McAuliffe, Sens. Tim Kaine and Mark Warner and every Democrat in the General Assembly had endorsed Northam. Perriello countered by trying to outflank Northam with left-leaning policy proposals, big national money (including hundreds of thousands of dollars from Democratic financiers George Soros and Donald Sussman) and flashy national endorsements (Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders.)

However, Northam did not leave the Trump-bashing to Perriello, who filmed one of his ads in front of an ambulance getting crushed, saying that it represented what Republicans wanted to do to health care.

Northam has regularly called Trump a "narcissistic maniac" in his TV ads — which Northam, a pediatric neurologist, has insisted is his medical diagnosis. There was little ideological contrast between the Democratic candidates, either; though Northam had a moderate reputation, he campaigned on support for gun control, same-sex marriage, and a host of other progressive issues.

There was a note of Democratic discord in Northam's victory, even as Perriello pledged unity: A group of anti-pipeline protesters stormed the stage at Northam's victory party, chanting and holding signs reading "NO TIME TO CELEBRATE. NO PIPELINE!" Perriello had made his opposition to two pipelines being built across the state a major issue in the campaign, and Northam has been non-committal on the pipelines, suggesting he wouldn't have the power as governor to stop their construction.

Before the race, operatives on both sides thought turnout above 500,000 would likely lead to a Perriello victory, but Northam thrived even with record-shattering voting levels. He ran strong in the state's urban centers of Norfolk and Richmond, and also defeated the former one-term congressman throughout populous Northern Virginia. Perriello's advantages among younger

voters and in the state's rural center and west weren't able to make up the difference.

The deciding factor, however, may have been Northam's advantage on the airwaves. He outspent Perriello on television by a two-to-one margin, highlighting his endorsements from the Washington Post, NARAL, and local and state elected officials. Perriello's spots, which played up his endorsements from Sanders, Warren and President Barack Obama's praise of him in 2010, were seen by far fewer voters.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Daniell, Kelsi
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:52:18 PM
Subject: FW: Inquiry re: Whitehouse/Harris letter on Definers

Making sure you saw this one.

From: Jackie Toth [mailto:jackietoth@cqrollcall.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:59 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Inquiry re: Whitehouse/Harris letter on Definers

Hi all,

Can the EPA please comment on the inquiry from Whitehouse and Harris today with concerns over conflicts of interest in the no-bid contract with Definers Public Affairs? Can the agency be specific on what services the firm is providing for the agency? Will the EPA be responding by Thursday as requested?

Deadline is no later than 3:15pm today.

Thanks all,

Jackie

Jackie Toth

CQ Legal

Energy & Environment Reporter/Analyst

O: 202-650-6518

C: 610-428-2276

@JackieTothDC

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Wed 11/29/2017 3:27:52 PM
Subject: RNC Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel: "Democrats were for tax reform before they were against it"

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 29, 2017

**RNC CHAIRWOMAN RONNA MCDANIEL: “DEMOCRATS WERE FOR TAX REFORM
BEFORE THEY WERE AGAINST IT”**

“All of these provisions are specifically meant to relieve tax burdens on the middle-class. That’s a goal that Democrats have repeatedly said they’d support.”

Democrats were for tax reform before they were against it

By Ronna McDaniel

Washington Examiner

November 29, 2017

...

The Tax Cuts & Jobs Act is steadily making its way through Congress and will be a welcome relief to families, businesses, and workers, letting everyone keep more of their hard-earned money.

Now, as the full Senate prepares to consider the bill, Democrats in Congress vowing to oppose the bill

should remember what they themselves once supported.

Just take Democrat leadership, for example. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said this August that his party wanted a plan that would ease the tax burden on the middle-class.

...

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., in May spoke in favor of reforms to create a fair tax system and grow the economy – and she specifically cautioned against ideological negotiation in the process.

...

Schumer and Pelosi are joined in hypocrisy by a slew of their Democrat colleagues: Sen. Claire McCaskill of Missouri has called for tax reform. So have Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Bill Nelson of Florida, Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, and Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin. Sen. Debbie Stabenow of Michigan agreed this year, as did Rep. Tim Ryan of Ohio.

In fact, Democrats were in favor of key provisions of the new tax cut package before there ever was a plan.

...

The tax plan will cut individual tax rates for low- and middle-income Americans, meaning the average middle-class family will see relief of nearly \$1,500 per year. It will roughly double the standard deduction, expand the zero tax bracket, and maintain a 10 percent bracket. It will effectively repeal Obamacare's individual mandate tax and eliminate special-interest deductions, all while protecting deductions that encourage philanthropy and home ownership.

Key provisions of the Senate's tax bill are bipartisan – or rather, nonpartisan. Notably, the bill will slash the corporate tax rate to 20 percent, marking the biggest reduction of this tax in our nation's history.

...

We have one question for the Democrats: Will you help Congress keep its promise to the public?

[Read the full op-ed here.](#)

###

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Fimrite, Peter
Sent: Thur 2/8/2018 8:58:34 PM
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks, man. Would also like to confirm how many people are employed in Region 9. I hear it's 650. Also, please confirm or correct the following statement, some of which was published in the New York Times:

More than 700 employees nationwide have left the EPA since Trump was elected, about 400 of them through buyouts. President Trump's proposed budget calls for a 30 percent cut in 2018, which could mean a loss of 3,000 to 4,000 of the nearly 15,000 EPA employees nationwide. The Superfund program's budget would be cut by almost a quarter from \$1 billion to \$762 million.

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 08, 2018 12:45 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Still working on this.

From: Fimrite, Peter [mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

1. The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result,

mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

2. Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words "climate change" were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.
3. Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.
4. Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?
5. Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM

To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>

Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox

EPA

Strategic Communications Advisor

Work Cell: 202.309.0934

Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM

To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: @pfimrite

To: Skolnik, Samuel[sskolnik@bgov.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 7:09:07 PM
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:08 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“The Definers contract is for news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:08 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:07 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Skolnik, Samuel [<mailto:sskolnik@bgov.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:42 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Hi Jahan –

I just sent the following email to press@epa.gov, but wanted to make sure I got some kind of response today. My questions are regarding Definers Corp.

Any help appreciated,

Sam

--

Hi all. I cover federal contracting and procurement issues for Bloomberg Government, and am working on a daily story based off of reports that EPA today has dropped the contract with Definers Corp. to help the EPA shape press coverage of the agency, through a no-bid contract.

Questions:

1 – Why did EPA drop the Definers contract?

2 – Why was this a sole-source solicitation in the first place?

3 – How did EPA decide to solicit the work from Definers Corp. specifically?

4 – What did EPA need to do to justify this as a sole-source solicitation? Did the agency do what it needed to, to abide the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other pertinent laws? What exactly was that?

5 – Does EPA believe there are inherent risks to agencies, and by extension taxpayers, in no-bid contracts? If so, what are they?

I'm looking for comment (or EPA's written thoughts, attributable to Jahan Wilcox or whoever the right person might be) by 4 p.m. today. My contact info is below.

Thank you,

Sam

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

Direct: (202) 416-3328

Cell: (702) 755-5729 *(On Fridays, please call my Cell)*

sskolnik@bgov.com

@samskolnik

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 6/29/2017 1:22:20 PM
Subject: RE: Definers

We knew what the cost was a month ago and now you are talking about a competitive bidding process. I don't think we talked about a competitive bidding process when we discussed Bulletin News. I don't disagree that it should be a competitive bidding process, but I think it's incredibly poor that after months on working on this, now this roadblock is up which will delay us from getting a service from getting us clips in real time. Let's proceed with opening the process up.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2017 9:13 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers

Jahan,

I spoke with our budget team yesterday. Because this would be a \$ 120,000 contract, we cannot move forward without going through a competitive bidding process. In addition, this cost is more than OPA's budget. In the past, we have solicited funds from the program offices to reduce the portion covered by OPA. Other offices have contributed in exchange for receiving the clips once a day.

I can start the process of soliciting funds and competing the contract. If you and Liz want me to proceed, I'll get a time estimate from our budget team.

Our contact at Definers has still not returned my request for a demo. - George

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 29, 2017, at 8:50 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

George –

I don't care how this happens but we need to make this happen as quickly as possible.

I'm trying to get a clip from an MSNBC show that is time sensitive and can't grab it because it's not online yet. We miss a lot of clips that happen overnight or on the weekends and we need a solution to fix this.

Thank you.

Jahan

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:57 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

That makes sense. I'm asking Joe to give me a demo. I would do it on Thursday, but I have to take the day off for a family matter. If you would like to be part of the demo, I could find another day. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:55 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

Thanks man! I am out on Friday but the rapid response clips are helpful and the interns

doing a great job but we miss stuff late at night.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:53 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

I'm trying to get a time set up with him on Friday. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:52 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Where are we on setting up a call with Joe. I really don't need to do a call, I know the quality of their product. Last night a story about in the NYT and would've been nice to have someone at the helm to send that out as it happened.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sat 10/7/2017 2:30:11 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Koch Industries: A health care deal with Democrats? THE PROBLEMS -- PUERTO RICO may need even MORE cash -- JOHN KELLY hasn't returned former COS phone calls -- OBAMA joining Columbia Country Club -- SPOTTED AT THE NATS GAME

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Koch Industries

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

[Visit the online home of Playbook](#)

Driving the Day

Good Saturday morning. @realDonaldTrump at 8:17 a.m.: "I called Chuck Schumer yesterday to see if the Dems want to do a great HealthCare Bill. ObamaCare is badly broken, big premiums. Who knows!"

-- HERE IS WHAT WE KNOW, MR. PRESIDENT : Republicans control both chambers. The two parties agree on little when it comes to health care. Top Republicans -- including your White House -- sent signals that it opposed a bipartisan health care negotiation between Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) in the Senate. You've threatened to stop Obamacare stabilization payments. If you want a deal with Democrats, it's going to require you abandoning long held positions, which, of course, is possible. But remember: you'll need cooperation of the majority, which doesn't like to feel cut out. And you might need 60 votes. And, remember: many who were opposed to the previous health care bill want an open process. Cutting a deal with Schumer isn't an open process. **ALSO, FROM A DEMOCRATIC AIDE**: "Particularly after the birth control decision yesterday, the administration has to stop sabotaging the law before anything real can happen."

SCHUMER'S TAKE: "The president wanted to make another run at repeal and replace and I told the president that's off the table. If he wants to work together to improve the existing health care system, we Democrats are open to his suggestions. A good place to start might be the Alexander-Murray negotiations that would stabilize the system and lower costs."

-- WHERE THE HEALTH CARE FIGHT STANDS: "Health-Care Standoff in Washington Raises Stakes of State-Level Fights," by WSJ's Stephanie Armour: "The collapse of the Republican effort to overhaul the health-care system and the resulting

standoff in Washington has pushed the fight to the states, where a brewing conflict over Medicaid is shaping up as the next battleground. The Trump administration is expected to rule soon on Kentucky's push to impose work requirements and other rules on Medicaid enrollees, as other states line up to follow suit. Democrats say that would weaken the program." <http://on.wsj.com/2xpDM48>

ALSO ON THE PRESIDENT'S MIND: "Trump cites FCC equal time rule in dig at 'unfunny' late-night comedians," by Brent Griffiths: "President Donald Trump mused Saturday morning about whether he and his fellow Republicans should receive equal time on TV due to what he sees as consistently unfair coverage from late-night comedians. 'Late Night host are dealing with the Democrats for their very 'unfunny' & repetitive material, always anti-Trump! Should we get Equal Time?' Trump wrote on Twitter Saturday. He later added: 'More and more people are suggesting that Republicans (and me) should be given Equal Time on T.V. when you look at the one-sided coverage?'

"Trump appears to be referencing the FCC's equal time rule, which applies to broadcast TV and radio stations, not cable TV. More importantly, the provisions only apply to a legally qualified candidate for public office, so it's unclear how this would apply to the president, who is not up for re-election until 2020. The president also seemed to be inferring that the equal time provision would apply to commentaries, like Jimmy Kimmel's monologues on health care. It is unclear how this would fall under equal time, since the rule is usually invoked when a candidate appears on the program or is granted some other form of free air time." <http://politi.co/2z5HRYj>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- PUERTO RICO NEEDS CASH : The governor of Puerto Rico has been calling Washington because the government is in a serious cash crunch. Tax revenue is non-existent at the moment and there are fears the government could shut down, according to multiple Capitol Hill sources involved. The White House is aware of the issue, and Treasury is taking the lead, our sources tell us. This potential cash infusion would be in addition to the disaster relief money Puerto Rico needs. The need to keep ponying up massive amounts of money to help fund relief in Puerto Rico, Texas, Florida and potentially Louisiana could become contentious on Capitol Hill. Republicans have in the past pushed to cut spending to cover the costs of funding bills like these.

ANNIE KARNI: "Kelly hasn't returned former chiefs of staff's messages: The former Marine general has charted his own path in the White House, largely keeping his own counsel rather than leaning on his predecessors": "When John Kelly was named White House chief of staff in July, one of his predecessors in the job, Rahm Emanuel, called his office to wish him luck and offer himself as a resource. Bill Daley, another former chief to President Barack Obama, sent him a note with the same message: My line is open if you need anything.

"Neither message was ever returned. In his first two frenetic months on the job, the retired four-star Marine general and former homeland security secretary has had

minimal contact with the small club of people who have served as gatekeepers to a president before him." <http://politi.co/2kylmt5>

-- **THIS MIRRORS WHAT WE HAVE HEARD** on Capitol Hill. Republicans have told us calls to Kelly frequently go unanswered for days, or even weeks. One lawmaker told us it's easier to get in touch with the president than his chief of staff.

BOSTON GLOBE'S ANNIE LINSKEY on **PAGE ONE** of the Saturday paper -- "**John Kelly: The Boston native in charge of bringing order to President Trump's White House**" <http://bit.ly/2fZyJzK>

WAPO -- "Nearly six dozen charter and military flights by Cabinet members, mapped" <http://wapo.st/2xpjij6j>

IF YOU READ ONE THING - DEXTER FILKINS in The New Yorker, "**Rex Tillerson at the Breaking Point**: Will Donald Trump let the Secretary of State do his job?": "Before taking office, Tillerson ran a corporation whose reach and success have few rivals in American history. In government, he has been uncomfortably subordinate to an unpredictable man. 'I think running a Fortune 500 company is a whole lot easier than working as a Cabinet official, running foreign policy for the United State government,' a senior Trump Administration official told me. 'It's two different worlds. You cannot be God. The big, dirty secret about Washington is that no one has a lot of power in this town, O.K.? Even the wannabe Machiavellis don't do well in this town.' ...

"According to the senior Administration official, Nikki Haley, the U.N. Ambassador, is seen as the most effective diplomat in the crisis; twice she has rallied unanimous support for tighter sanctions at the U.N. Security Council, despite the members' reluctance to discomfit China. 'Nikki's getting it done,' the official told me. 'She's bringing home the bacon.' This has apparently fed an enmity between Tillerson and Haley. 'Rex hates her,' the official said. 'He f***ing hates her.'" <http://bit.ly/2y5IW4s>

SUICIDE PACT, WHAT SUICIDE PACT? -- A source close to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is throwing cold water on the report that Mnuchin, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis are part of an agreement that if one of them leaves the administration, all three would leave. "He is not part of any suicide pact. He enjoyed working with the president on the campaign and is honored to serve in his cabinet," the source said.

***** **A message from Koch Industries:** Facing challenges can be intimidating. But at Koch, it's how we work. From creating renewable fuels to designing innovations that make vehicles more aerodynamic and energy-efficient, we challenge the status quo. Our more than 70,000 U.S. employees help reduce waste, and make everyday products better. See for yourself at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

THE NEW SWAMP -- "Report: Trump-tied lobbyists cash in on their connections," by AP's Tami Abdollah: "Records through Aug. 31 showed at least 44 registered federal

lobbyists with ties to Trump or Vice President Mike Pence. These firms have collectively billed nearly \$41.8 million to clients - seven of the 10 most lucrative being foreign interests, according to the analysis of federal lobbying disclosure filings.

"Clients have included the owner of a private equity group that received government approval to take over the major for-profit college chain University of Phoenix, and the directors of Wells Fargo, which has faced increased government scrutiny after its workers created bogus accounts for unwitting clients. Others include the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the governments of Afghanistan, Kenya, Iraq, Guatemala and Malaysia, and Moise Katumbi, the opposition leader in the Democratic Republic of the Congo." <http://bit.ly/2ghHORS>

2018 WATCH -- "Arizona Sen. Flake's vulnerability feeds GOP Senate concerns," by AP's Michael Balsamo and Brian Melley in Phoenix: "Arizona Republican Sen. Jeff Flake's re-election race is becoming a case study in the GOP's convulsions between the establishment, a furious base and angry donors. After bucking Donald Trump in a state the president won, Flake is bottoming out in polls. Yet Republicans look like they may be stuck with a hard-core conservative challenger who some fear could win the primary but lose in the general election.

"A White House search for a candidate to replace former state Sen. Kelli Ward in the primary appears to have hit a wall. And now conservatives want to turn Arizona into the latest example of a Trump Train outsider taking down a member of the GOP establishment. ... Despite discontent among some Republicans over Ward, Bannon met with her last week at a conservative conference in Colorado Springs to encourage her campaign, according to a Republican official who demanded anonymity to disclose the previously unreported private meeting." <http://bit.ly/1ckcXew>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "North Korea preparing long-range missile test: RIA cites Russian lawmaker," by Reuters' Jack Stubbs in Moscow: "North Korea is preparing to test a long-range missile which it believes can reach the west coast of the United States, a Russian lawmaker just returned from a visit to Pyongyang was quoted as saying on Friday. Anton Morozov, a member of the Russian lower house of parliament's international affairs committee, and two other Russian lawmakers visited Pyongyang on Oct. 2-6, Russia's RIA news agency reported.

"They are preparing for new tests of a long-range missile. They even gave us mathematical calculations that they believe prove that their missile can hit the west coast of the United States,' RIA quoted Morozov as saying. 'As far as we understand, they intend to launch one more long-range missile in the near future. And in general, their mood is rather belligerent.'" <http://reut.rs/2yOpeHr>

FOR YOUR SITUATIONAL AWARENESS -- "Hurricane Nate forms, heads to central Gulf of Mexico" - AP: "Hurricane Nate gained force as it continues rapidly moving over the central Gulf of Mexico early Saturday after drenching Central America in rain that was blamed for at least 21 deaths. Forecasters said it was likely to reach the

U.S. Gulf Coast over the weekend. Louisiana and Mississippi officials declared states of state of emergency and Louisiana ordered some people to evacuate coastal areas and barrier islands ahead of its expected landfall Saturday night or early Sunday. Evacuations began at some offshore oil platforms in the Gulf. Mississippi's government said it would open 11 evacuation shelters in areas away from the immediate coast." <http://bit.ly/2hVf7O1>

ON LAS VEGAS ... -- "Investigators Probing Whether Others Were in Las Vegas Gunman's Suite," by NBC News' Tom Winter and Pete Williams: "Investigators are trying to nail down whether anyone else was in the hotel suite reserved by the Las Vegas gunman during the time he was registered there, multiple senior law enforcement officials briefed on the investigation into the shooting told NBC News. The investigators are puzzled by two discoveries: First, a charger was found that does not match any of the cell phones that belonged to Stephen Paddock ... And second, garage records show that during a period when Paddock's car left the hotel garage, one of his key cards was used to get into his room. There are several possible explanations for these anomalies, the investigators say, but they want to get to the bottom of it." <http://nbcnews.to/2y55rWx>

PLAYBOOK METRO SECTION -- "Obama Will Join Columbia Country Club in Chevy Chase," by Washingtonian's Elaina Plott: "Former President Barack Obama has accepted an invitation to join Columbia Country Club in Chevy Chase, Maryland, Washingtonian has learned. It's the second country club he's joined since leaving office; in May ... he joined Robert Trent Jones Golf Club in Gainesville, Virginia. Columbia's board revealed the news in a letter to members on Thursday. 'Following careful deliberation, the Board of Governors voted to extend an invitation for Honorary Membership to former President of the United States Barack Obama,' reads an excerpt shared with Washingtonian. 'We have received official word from Mr. Obama of his acceptance of our invitation.'" <http://bit.ly/2kxRIDg>

-- ALSO A MEMBER OF COLUMBIA: Tony Kornheiser, a frequent Obama golf partner.

UGH, THE NATIONALS -- Game 2 vs. Chicago Cubs, 5:30 p.m.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Manuela Barela passes crosses on Oct. 6 set up to honor those killed during the mass shooting in Las Vegas. | Gregory Bull/AP Photo

STORY OF THE DAY -- YASHAR ALI in HUFFPOST: "TV Journalist Says Harvey Weinstein Masturbated In Front Of Her": "Harvey Weinstein once trapped a woman in the hallway of a restaurant that was closed to the public and masturbated in front of her until he ejaculated, she says. The accusation comes a day after Weinstein was the

subject of a bombshell New York Times report that revealed that he has settled at least eight sexual harassment claims.

"The incident took place a decade ago, according to Lauren Sivan, who at the time was a news anchor on a local cable channel in New York, Long Island 12. She says the experience left her shocked, and that while she told friends privately what happened, she remained quiet because she was in a long-term relationship and fearful of the power that Weinstein wielded in the media." <http://bit.ly/2xobB5l>

-- NYT'S BROOKS BARNES: "Without Harvey Weinstein, His Company Faces Uncertain Future" <http://nyti.ms/2fZQJde>

AT FIRST STREET -- "Trump supporters eager to 'drain the swamp' help fill Republican Party coffers," by WaPo's Matea Gold: "Fueled by a string of fundraising appeals from President Trump to his supporters, the Republican Party is on track to raise more money from small-dollar contributions than it has collected in more than a decade. The influx of cash from Trump's base is helping the GOP amass a major advantage as the parties prepare to battle for control of Congress in the 2018 elections, with the [RNC] pulling in nearly twice as much money overall as its Democratic counterpart this year. ... This year, more than \$40 million of the \$68 million in direct contributions to the RNC by the end of August came in donations of \$200 and less - nearly 60 percent of contributions." <http://wapo.st/2fZuzlo>

THE TRUMP FAMILY -- "In book, Ivana Trump relives divorce from future president," by AP's Jonathan Lemire: "A new book from Donald Trump's first wife pulls back the curtain on a tumultuous period of the president's life, including the messy divorce that was splashed across New York's tabloids for weeks. Ivana Trump, who was married to the real estate magnate from 1977 to 1992, writes in 'Raising Trump' that she knew her marriage was over soon after a day in December 1989. 'This young blonde woman approached me out of the blue and said 'I'm Marla and I love your husband. Do you?' writes Ivana Trump. 'I said 'Get lost. I love my husband.' It was unladylike but I was in shock.' ... But she and the president have returned to far warmer terms. She writes that they speak about once a week and that she encourages him to keep using Twitter." <http://bit.ly/2y6h7IN>

WHAT LANGLEY IS READING -- "CIA vet replaces controversial official for national security post," by Nahal Toosi, Daniel Lippman and Bryan Bender: "President Donald Trump has placed a Central Intelligence Agency veteran in a key White House post that has been a point of friction with the CIA. Michael Barry took over as the National Security Council's senior director for intelligence programs in recent weeks, sources in and outside the Trump administration said. He replaces Ezra Cohen-Watnick, a controversial official who left in August after clashing with some CIA officials, as well as national security adviser H.R. McMaster. ... One ... former intelligence official said he knows 'for a fact' that Barry has served in the CIA." <http://politi.co/2fSpaiB>

VALLEY TALK - "Behind Tesla's Production Delays: Parts of Model 3 Were Being

Made by Hand," by WSJ's Tim Higgins in Fremont, Calif.: "Tesla Inc. blamed 'production bottlenecks' for having made only a fraction of the promised 1,500 Model 3s, the \$35,000 sedan designed to propel the luxury electric-car maker into the mainstream. Unknown to analysts, investors and the hundreds of thousands of customers who signed up to buy it, as recently as early September major portions of the Model 3 were still being banged out by hand, away from the automated production line, according to people familiar with the matter. ... Automotive experts say it is unusual to be building large parts of a car by hand during production. 'That's not how mass production vehicles are made,' said Dennis Virag, a manufacturing consultant who has worked in the automotive industry for 40 years. 'That's horse-and-carriage type manufacturing.' ...

"In a statement, a Tesla spokeswoman declined to answer questions for this article and said, 'For over a decade, the WSJ has relentlessly attacked Tesla with misleading articles that, with few exceptions, push or exceed the boundaries of journalistic integrity. While it is possible that this article could be an exception, that is extremely unlikely.' The Journal disagrees with the company's categorization of its journalism."

<http://on.wsj.com/2xprMul>

***** **A message from Koch Industries:** Flint Hills Resources, a Koch company, is the fifth largest ethanol producer in the United States - with seven ethanol plants, and 850 million gallons of annual capacity. Each year, farmers from America's heartland sell 288 million bushels of their corn to our facilities where we extract the necessary ingredients for both ethanol and high-quality biodiesel. We convert the remaining portions of the kernels into distillers grains, a livestock feed that helps nourish hogs, cattle and poultry. Farmers work hard to grow their crops, and we strive to help create the most value from their harvest. We also focus on reducing waste and leaving more natural resources available for future needs. It's part of Koch's commitment to operate responsibly in the communities across America that are home to our more than 70,000 U.S. employees. Learn more about our renewable fuels at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

-- **"Anger, questions at USC after second medical school dean departs over inappropriate behavior,"** by L.A. Times' Sarah Parvini, Paul Pringle and Harriet Ryan: <http://lat.ms/2fZ1NHv>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Dianne Brandi, the Fox News Loyalist Who 'Knows Everything,' is Stepping Aside," by Vanity Fair's Gabe Sherman: On Friday "the network said in a statement that Brandi is taking a 'voluntary leave' from the company. ... Insiders theorize that her roadmap of where the bodies are buried may have protected her. But lately that protection has been weakening. ... At a funeral this August for former Fox head of graphics Rich O'Brien, Brandi told colleagues that she expected to leave the network. 'She's been saying she's unhappy,' the colleague said. 'She said there's no leadership at Fox. And she's been named in suit after suit. It's miserable.'" <http://bit.ly/2yNX4w4>

-- **"Bannon ally wants to turn government media agency into 'legacy' for former Trump adviser,"** by CNN's Hadas Gold: "Jeffrey Scott Shapiro, a former investigative reporter who has ties to Bannon, was tapped by the White House for a position within

the [Broadcasting Board of Governors] over the summer. ... Shapiro has told colleagues that his goal is to turn the entire [BBG] into a 'Bannon legacy,' according to three sources within or familiar with the agency. He has also said he believes the Castros have infiltrated the Office of Cuba Broadcasting." <http://cnmmon.ie/2gio404>

-- **"A Conversation With Bret Baier, the News Guy at Fox News,"** by The Atlantic's McKay Coppins: "The Special Report anchor on the "tough year" his network has had, attacks on the media, and his ongoing struggle to book an interview with President Trump." <http://theatlantic.com/2y0ih6R>

-- **ROB GIFFORD** has been named managing editor of CBSN.

-- **Joe Ruiz** has been hired by CNN Politics to be senior weekend editor. He most recently has been NPR's weekend editor in charge of digital coverage.

DANIEL'S POSTCARD FROM THE NEW YORKER'S TECHFEST - MICHAEL LYNTON, chairman of Snap and former head of Sony, in a Q&A on Friday with David Remnick: "I think there is room in legislation for what is to be done about privacy. ... Going back to when Brandeis was a professor at Harvard, before he sat on the Supreme Court ... and his partner's daughter was -- it was right when photography started coming into newspapers, and his daughter was photographed going into a party that was put into the Boston Globe ...

"And he was outraged, and Brandeis wrote, at that time in the Harvard Law Review, a long piece on privacy, and how photography and new electronic devices would create a real problem for privacy going forward, and that ... something had to be done with legislation to deal with that. Now, subsequently, nothing has been done, but I think maybe we need to go back and look at when this whole thing first began and revisit it and try and understand whether you can just leave it be the wild west, or you in some way shape or form respect people's privacy."

-- **FORMER EPA ADMINISTRATOR GINA MCCARTHY**, in a Q&A with Elizabeth Kolbert: "I think if we can realistically remind people that you don't need to be seeing pollution to understand that it impacts your health and your kid's future. ... I don't know of any Republicans that don't want clean air, clean water and safe places for their kids to go to school and play outside. I don't see them rushing to want to live on the fence-line of a refinery where you don't know what the quality of the air is. ... My fear is that more hurricanes and more intense storms may be the price for that delay."

CLICKER - "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker -- **14 keepers** <http://politi.co/2yOJ5WS>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman, filing from New York:

-- **"How Smartphones Hijack Our Minds,"** by Nicholas Carr on the cover of WSJ's Review section: "Research suggests that as the brain grows dependent on phone

technology, the intellect weakens." <http://on.wsj.com/2hU3ozg>

-- **"No Enemies,"** by Jacob Dreyer in Even Magazine - per Longreads.com's description: "For a generation of Chinese intellectuals, the events of 1989 were a chance to erase the ghosts of the past. But what happens when your side loses? When the entire country moves backward, not forward? Jacob Dreyer tells the story of modern China through the lives of four men: visual artists Xu Bing and Ai Weiwei, novelist Mo Yan, and activist Liu Xiaobo, who died this year in captivity." <http://bit.ly/2hS68gc>

-- **"Broken Windows,"** by George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson in the March 1982 issue of The Atlantic: "The police and neighborhood safety." <http://theatlantic.com/2yN0DTw>

-- **"The French farmer smuggling migrants in the Alps,"** by Daniel Trilling in the New Statesman: "He has found himself at the centre of Europe's migration crisis - but is he a hero or villain?" <http://bit.ly/2wD9kiy>

-- **"Philosophers Who Like Stuff,"** by Emrys Westacott in Humanities magazine - per ALDaily.com's description: "Philosophers have criticized luxury for a long time. But the consensus has always had its critics: the philosophers who like stuff." <http://bit.ly/2y6lx2T>

-- **"How the Elderly Lose Their Rights,"** by Rachel Aviv in The New Yorker: "Guardians can sell the assets and control the lives of senior citizens without their consent-and reap a profit from it." <http://bit.ly/2xZLhf1>

-- **"Can This State Be Saved?"** by The Weekly Standard's Alice Lloyd: "Connecticut has dug itself into a deep economic hole; David Walker senses political opportunity for an accountant." <http://twos.io/2hVjEQf>

-- **"Preet Bharara Is Now in the Trump-Opposition Business,"** by Andrew Rice in NYMag: "The prosecutor and his entrepreneur brother are trying to build a media empire for the resistance era. First step: a podcast." <http://nym.ag/2y0jrQ1>

-- **"Nestlé Makes Billions Bottling Water It Pays Nearly Nothing For,"** by Caroline Winter in Bloomberg Businessweek: "The company's operation in Michigan reveals how it's dominated the industry by going into economically depressed areas with lax water laws." <https://bloom.bg/2hRBXG1>

-- **"How Essential Oils Became the Cure for Our Age of Anxiety,"** by Rachel Monroe in The New Yorker: "Aromatic oils have become big business. But are they medicine or marketing?" <http://bit.ly/2fRc6dm>

-- **"A Former Superagent Bets Big on a More Diverse Hollywood,"** by Calvin Baker in the NYT Magazine: "After years as the industry's top African-American talent agent, Charles D. King is building an audacious new production company - with a vision for bringing long-neglected stories to the screen." <http://nyti.ms/2yuyJ2j>

-- "**Jackie Chan's Plan to Keep Kicking Forever**," by Alex Pappademas in GQ: "Jackie Chan is in his 60s now. His stunts aren't as insane as they once were, but he's back on American screens with a killer new revenge flick called The Foreigner (Jackie vs. evil James Bond!). So GQ sent Alex Pappademas to Beijing to interview the king in his castle-a vast martial-arts complex as awesome and over-the-top as Jackie Chan himself." <http://bit.ly/2wCaR8k> (h/t Longform.org)

-- "**Mayonnaise, Disrupted**," by Bianca Bosker in the Nov. Atlantic: "How did Josh Tetrick's vegan-mayo company become a Silicon Valley darling-and what is he really selling?" <http://theatlantic.com/2014/11/22/2444444/>

-- "**The Mind of John McPhee**," by Sam Anderson in the NYT Magazine: "A deeply private writer reveals his obsessive process." <http://nyti.ms/2giJrhC>

Playbook Reads

SPOTTED at last night's Nats game: Labor Secretary Alex Acosta, Sean Spicer, Jake Sullivan, Anita Dunn and Bob Bauer, David and Ann Castagnetti, Steve Rosenthal, James Carville, Luke Russert, and Erik Smith with sons Dolan, Henry and Mack.

--@SteveScalise: "What a memorable birthday! I threw the first pitch at tonight's @Nationals vs. @Cubs #NLDS game!" **26-second video** <http://bit.ly/2y0MKo0>

ENGAGED -- OBAMA ALUMNI -- Fran Holuba, who runs the boutique consulting firm Chief Social Architects and is a Politico and Obama NSC alum, got engaged yesterday to entrepreneur **Giuseppe Lanzone**, founder of Peruvian Brothers, the D.C. food truck enterprise. "He planned a surprise trip to Paris while we were in Europe visiting his family for a wedding in Lugano, Switzerland. We met in D.C. right after he had finished the 2012 Olympics in London. ... [W]e had both been asked to work this political cartoon event as guest bartenders at Malmaison before it opened to the public. He was very shy and asked me how to cut limes and we've never stopped laughing about that since." **Pic** <http://politi.co/2xZbXiy>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Starlee Coleman, the Goldwater Institute's D.C. press and government affairs rep, and **Michael Coleman**, D.C. bureau chief for the Albuquerque Journal and a board member of the Regional Reporters Association, recently welcomed their first child, Autumn Belle Coleman. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2fTabVy>

HAPPY 10th ANNIVERSARY to **Melissa Kelly**, deputy chief of staff and comms director for Rep. Pete Olson (R-Texas) and **David Kelly**, principal at Storm King Strategies and Bush 43 DOT and NHTSA alum

BIRTHDAYS: Chris Krueger of Cowen & Company ... Emily Davis, deputy assistant

USTR for public and media affairs ... GWU professor Sean Aday is 5-0 ... Suz Redfearn ... DNC chairman Tom Perez is 56 ... NYT's Charlie Savage, a Pulitzer Prize winner ... Roll Call photog Tom Williams is 43 ... Nation editor and publisher Katrina vanden Heuvel, celebrating by "going dancing-at a dance hall that only gets lively after 2 a.m. Then a couple very dry martinis" (hat tip: Caitlin Graf) ... Lt. Col. Oliver North (ret.) is 74 ... Barbara E. Martinez ... Rep. Bill Foster (D-Ill.) is 62 ... Mark Orlowski, executive director and founder of the Sustainable Endowments Institute ... Brandon Hurlbut, Obama WH and DOE alum now co-founder of Boundary Stone Partners ... CNN's Elizabeth Hartfield ... Bill Sweeney, staff director for the Senate DPCC ... Todd Weiler ... Kate Berner ... Arie Lipnick, principal at Macadamia Strategies ... Jay Korff ... MTA chair Joe Lhota ...

... **Alice Lloyd**, staff writer at the Weekly Standard, celebrating in Aruba (h/t Jenna Liffhits) ... Adam Fetcher, comms adviser and speechwriter at Patagonia ... Jacqueline Murphy ... Politico Europe's Anca Gurzu ... Patricia VanDyke ... former Interior deputy secretary David J. Hayes, "who recently launched the State Energy & Environmental Impact Center to help support state Attorneys General who are fighting against regulatory rollbacks and other actions" (h/t Kendra Barkoff) ... David Gellman of Federal Advocates (h/t Allison Turner) ... Jackie Murphy ... Holly Arthur ... Allison Worsham ... Gavin Carson ... Stephen Jackson ... Karen Maria Duca ... Jeffrey Blount ... Dinah Abrahamson ... James Ramsey ... Catherine Jaynes, the Bush Institute's director of evaluation and research ... James Ramsay ... BP's Tara Napier Harrison ... Jen Hengstenberg ... John Hedgecoth ... Mary Cox (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

THE SHOWS, by @MattMackowiak, filing from Oranjestad, Aruba:

-- **"Fox News Sunday"**: National Rifle Association executive director Chris Cox ... Steve Wynn. Panel: Gillian Turner, Julie Pace, Tom Rogan and Juan Williams

-- **CNN's "State of the Union"**: Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) ... Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.). Panel: Jennifer Granholm, Rick Santorum, Mary Katharine Ham and Karina Jean-Pierre

-- **NBC's "Meet the Press"**: OMB Director Mick Mulvaney ... Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) ... House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.). Panel: Kristen Welker, Carol Lee, Eugene Robinson and Hugh Hewitt

-- **CBS's "Face the Nation"**: Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) ... National Rifle Association CEO Wayne LaPierre ... Mary Ellen O'Toole and Fran Townsend ... Adam Winkler. Panel: Jeffrey Goldberg, Susan Page, David Leonhardt and Ramesh Ponnuru

-- **ABC's "This Week"**: Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.) ... Rep. Scott Taylor (R-Va.). Panel: Matthew Dowd, Geoff Bennett, Jeanne Cummings and Susan Glasser

-- **Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: Rep. Diane Black (R-Tenn.) ... David Clarke ... Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas) ... Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas). Panel: Al D'Amato

and Rich Lowry

-- **Fox News' "MediaBuzz"**: Shannon Pettypiece ... Mollie Hemingway ... Marie Harf ... James Rosen ... Shelby Holliday

-- **CNN's "Inside Politics"** with John King: Abby Phillip, Karoun Demirjian, Michael Warren and Sara Murray

-- **CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"**: David Frum, Thomas Friedman and Leah Libresco ... Akhil Amar ... former Australian Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer

-- **CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: Panel: USA Today editor in chief Joanne Lipman, American Urban Radio Networks' April Ryan and Sentinel Newspapers executive editor Brian Karem ... Washington Post executive editor Marty Baron ... Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) ... Charlie Sykes

-- **Univision's "Al Punto"**: Las Vegas massacre survivor Maritza Flores ... Rep. Ruben Kihuen (D-Nev.) ... San Juan, Puerto Rico Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz ... former Puerto Rico Attorney General Jose Fuentes ... White House Policy and Interagency Coordination Director Carlos Diaz-Rosillo ... Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.) ... chef Jose Andres

-- **C-SPAN: "The Communicators"**: WhiteScope founder and security researcher Billy Rios ... CanBusHack founder and DEF CON's Car Hacking Village's Robert Leale ... FBI Las Vegas Division Special Agent in Charge Aaron Rouse ... **"Newsmakers"**: Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA), questioned by The Washington Post's Ed O'Keefe and The Los Angeles Times' Sarah Wire ... **"Q&A"**: New York Magazine's Wil Hylton

-- **PBS' "To the Contrary"**: Panel: Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.), The Washington Post's Jennifer Rubin, Independent Women's Voice senior policy analyst Patrice Onwuka and former Judge and federal prosecutor Debra Carnahan

-- **Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen

***** **A message from Koch Industries**: It's estimated that by the year 2030 there will be two billion motor vehicles on the world's highways - twice the number currently on the road. Koch companies are already preparing for this challenge with ideas for improving fuel efficiency while still embracing safety. Our researchers are integrating aerodynamic systems into automotive grilles to provide up to 20% weight savings and up to 30% better aero performance. Each step forward puts us closer to the bigger goal of responsibly powering far more automobiles than ever before. From transportation and technology to food, clothing and shelter, Koch is anticipating the needs of tomorrow and working on the solutions today. The quest for better never stops, and our more than 70,000 U.S. employees are helping to lead the way. See them in action at ChallengeAccepted.com. *****

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From: Morning Energy
Sent: Mon 1/8/2018 3:06:44 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Energy: Crucial day for water fights at Supreme Court — Grid withstands frigid winter blast — Steyer to announce political plans today

By Anthony Adragna and Kelsey Tamborrino | 01/08/2018 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Annie Snider, Darius Dixon and Alex Guillén

HIGH NOON FOR WATER WARS: The Supreme Court hears arguments this morning in a pair of long-running water disputes between states that will test what role the federal government should play in such conflicts. First up is *Texas v. New Mexico and Colorado*, a case where the federal government intervened on the side of Texas, which argues that New Mexico is allowing its residents to take water that belongs to the Lone Star state under a 1939 compact. A court-appointed special master faulted the federal government's move, writing in an interim report last year that the U.S. overstepped its bounds since it has no claim itself to the water, and should only be allowed to bring claims under reclamation law. The high court today will consider only what the federal government's role should be, not the merits of the water fight itself.

The second case in the double-header is *Florida v. Georgia*, where the federal government took the opposite tack. Even though the Army Corps of Engineers operates a series of dams and reservoirs along the contested Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River river system, it did not join the litigation when Florida sued Georgia in 2014 to cap its offtake after Florida's prized Apalachicola Bay oyster fishery collapsed. The court-appointed special master in this case ruled last February that Florida showed "real harm" and at least "likely misuse of resources by Georgia," but said that without the federal government's involvement, there was no way to guarantee that a cap on the Peach State's consumption would result in more water for Florida. Justices today decide whether to accept the special master's ruling for Georgia.

More than parochial: It won't just be the parties tangled in these particular water fights who will be watching closely. Water rights have traditionally been the purview of the states, and they have fought hard to keep it that way. As growing populations and fluctuations in supplies stress water basins across the country, states will be watching the justices closely to see how much power the federal government should have in settling these type of fights in the future.

WELCOME TO MONDAY! We're your co-hosts Anthony Adragna and Kelsey Tamborrino, and EPA's Aaron Ringel was first to identify Robert Todd Lincoln as being in the area for three presidential assassinations. For today: Which current congressman served almost ten years on their state's public service commission? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com and ktamborrino@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@KelseyTam](https://twitter.com/KelseyTam), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT: EPA staffers offered up suggestions to improve the agency in an internal anonymous survey last year ranging from increasing agency budgets to making it easier for staffers to work from home. The survey obtained by POLITICO showed the majority of the [more than 1,400 responses](#) stayed true to traditional bureaucratic grievances, Pro's Alex

Guillén reports, but dozens of employees also used the survey to vent frustrations about Administrator Scott Pruitt and the Trump administration. "The only way to increase efficiency at EPA is to increase the budget and allow room for innovative ideas. There is no time or money to focus on innovation because staff are spread too thin," wrote one employee. Others offered some positive comments, but some employees argued that budget cuts would undermine Pruitt's goal of establishing better coordination with the states. And almost 100 workers pressed for greater telework opportunities.

Behind the cloak of anonymity others used the survey as an opportunity to bash the administration's political leadership - two called for Trump to be impeached - with multiple comments expressing dismay at watching Pruitt or Trump bash EPA and praise coal miners. "It would be nice if the administration showed some empathy for us," one employee wrote. The survey, conducted in May 2017, comes as part of EPA's effort to be "more efficient, effective and accountable," according to an all-staff email from Pruitt's chief of staff. EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said the agency was taking the survey responses seriously.

PASSED THE TEST: The frigid blast that sent temperatures plunging across the East will start to ease today, but the past few days may have sapped the urgency to act on Energy Secretary Rick Perry's controversial grid resiliency pricing proposal, which argued that the electric system was threatened by extreme cold periods. Still, the cold snap brought a bit of good news for several fuels: coal got to shine in PJM (as natural gas prices soared enough to make it competitive); oil helped save the day as New England showed its wintertime dependence on the niche power fuel; nuclear reactors provided large chunks of power across the Northeast even though a power line outage shut the Pilgrim plant in Massachusetts; and, in PJM, wind power routinely contributed 4,000 megawatts or more.

Perry's plan calls for giving financial support to power plants that keep 90 days' worth of fuel on-site, effectively limiting it to coal and nuclear generation - and to PJM in particular. To press his point, Perry's rule specifically urged FERC to "take action before the winter heating season begins so as to prevent the potential failure of the grid from the loss of fuel-secure generation - as almost happened during the 2014 Polar Vortex." Yet, our recent cold snap, which shot demand in PJM up to around 136,400 MW over the weekend (just 4,100 MW short of the 2014 event) showed that for most of the East, the issue is more about high prices rather than low fuel stocks.

And then there's New England. The region continues to struggle with the impacts of its longstanding infrastructure limits in the winter: power prices are high, natural gas demand for heating required generators to turn to oil-fired electricity production, and last week's storm hindered some resupply of oil. There are four nuclear reactors in New England, and having an onsite fuel requirement wouldn't have kept Pilgrim from tripping offline Thursday.

ISO-New England spokesperson Marcia Blomberg said the region's power system continued "to operate reliably" throughout the weekend but aired a considerable amount of caution. "While the ISO is continually assessing the reliability of the system, other conditions continue to make grid operations difficult," she wrote in an email to reporters Sunday. "Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station remains out of service, some oil-fired generation is nearing emissions limitations, and other

power plants are awaiting fuel deliveries that were postponed because of Thursday's storm. But these deliveries will not begin before [today] at the earliest."

HEADS UP! FERC has until Wednesday to take some sort of action on Perry proposed rule to support coal-fired and nuclear power plants. His "grid resiliency proposal" calls for guaranteeing payments to power plants that maintain 90 days of fuel on site. Few observers expect FERC to fully embrace the former Texas governor's proposal, and it's got a wide range of options to consider, from issuing an interim rule to holding a technical conferences or issuing a request for information.

FOR YOUR RADAR: President Donald Trump is due to deliver remarks today at the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention in Nashville, and officials expect the administration's effort to eliminate Obama-era regulations, including its intended rewrite of the Obama-era waters of the U.S. rule, to pop up during the speech. "This is an audience that has warmly welcomed the deregulatory agenda pushed by the President, and I would expect acknowledgment of that on both sides," the National Economic Council's Ray Starling said.

WHAT'S THE FUTURE HOLD? Billionaire environmentalist Tom Steyer makes a big announcement about "his political future and plans for 2018" today at 10:45 a.m. today in Washington (which seems to make a California gubernatorial or Senate bid seem a lot less likely). That comes as he unveiled a number of senior hires at his NextGen America: Heather Hargreaves as executive director and Aleigha Cavalier as communications director, among others.

IZEMBEK ON DECK: The Interior Department has approved a land swap deal that Senate Energy Chairman [Lisa Murkowski](#) has [been pushing](#) for years, both [The Washington Post](#) and [New York Times](#) reported this weekend. Interior will allow a remote Alaskan village to construct a 12-mile road through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, overruling decades-old wilderness protections, and linking King Cove to an isolated all-weather airport.

In response, the Sierra Club slammed the plan as "disastrous" and urged the administration to reconsider. "Trump and Zinke should instead review the options previously proposed by the Army Corps of Engineers, and develop a solution that meets the needs of local residents while protecting Izembek National Wildlife Refuge," Athan Manuel, the group's land protection program director, said in a statement.

WHITE HOUSE PREPARING SOLAR TRADE DECISION: The White House is readying to unveil an aggressive trade crackdown targeting China and other competitors' alleged unfair practices, POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia and Doug Palmer report, including a decision on whether or not to put a tariff on solar imports. Trump is scheduled to meet with Cabinet secretaries and senior advisers as soon as this week, an administration source said, to begin finalizing trade decisions like the one on solar imports. "Senior aides are also laying plans to use Trump's State of the Union address at the end of the month to flesh out the president's trade vision and potentially preview a more aggressive posture toward China," Andrew and Doug write. Upcoming meetings will shed light on just how aggressive the president plans to be, with aides saying the solar decision isn't expected this week but could come the week after. Read

more.

PANEL: OROVILLE DAM DISASTER 'A WAKEUP CALL' FOR DAM SAFETY:

Independent investigators probing the cause of last year's dangerous spillway failure at the highest dam in the country that forced the evacuation of nearly 200,000 residents downstream have cited a "long-term systemic failure" by both the state of California and federal regulators. In a 584 page report released Friday, the forensic team pointed to errors dating back to the 1960s when an inexperienced engineer was put in charge of designing the dam's two spillways. The panel said the state put "insufficient priority" on dam safety and too much emphasis on delivering water to the State Water Project, which feeds major agricultural users and big southern California metropolitan areas.

"The fact that this incident happened to the owner of the tallest dam in the United States, under regulation of a federal agency, with repeated evaluation by reputable outside consultants, in a state with a leading dam safety regulatory program, is a wake-up call for everyone involved in dam safety," the panel wrote.

DON'T YOU KNOW EACH CLOUD CONTAINS PEBBLES FROM HEAVEN: The Army Corps of Engineers says it has received a complete application from the developers of the proposed Pebble Mine in Alaska, triggering what will be a years-long process to produce an environmental impact study for the controversial project. Aside from the open-pit mine, the company seeks to build a 230-megawatt natural gas power plant on site, a 188-mile gas pipeline to feed it, an 83-mile transportation corridor to move metal to Cook Inlet, and a permanent export facility. "We believe that as people become more familiar with our proposed project design and the environmental safeguards it incorporates, there will be an increasing degree of support for the project," said Pebble Partnership CEO Tom Collier.

Opponents of the rule will point to EPA's previous work under the Obama administration that concluded mining of any scale was too risky for the world's biggest wild salmon fishery. A court deal between the developers and EPA last year allowed the application with the Army Corps to move forward, but Alaska's governor, independent Bill Walker, has long opposed the mine, saying last October that developers had not proven the project would not risk the fish.

WISCONSIN VIP PLANT CLEARS KEY HURDLE: Foxconn's much-anticipated Wisconsin liquid-crystal display screens plant won a major victory after a pond and roughly 26 acres of wetlands just miles from Lake Michigan were too isolated from larger downstream waters to merit federal Clean Water Act protections, Pro's Annie Snider reports. The project has been touted by Trump, who took credit for the company's investment at a July White House event with the company's chairman. And it's been a major priority for Gov. Scott Walker and House Speaker Paul Ryan, in whose district the facility would be built.

MAIL CALL - JERSEY NO FAN OF DRILLING: Three Democratic New Jersey lawmakers told Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke the draft offshore drilling plan should be "immediately rejected" in a Friday letter. The proposal "shows a complete disregard for New Jersey's economy, environment, and quality of life, and should be immediately rejected," Sens. Bob Menendez and Cory Booker and House Energy and Commerce ranking member Frank Pallone, write, citing the

need for an "unspoiled coastline" as the state continues to rebuild post-Hurricane Sandy. Read it [here](#).

PALLONE-LED LETTER PUTS FOCUS ON AXED CONTRACT: A group of Democratic lawmakers aired their "outstanding questions" on EPA's now-canceled contract with the Republican-affiliated Definers Public Affairs on Friday. "Hiring a firm that offers services attacking the press and surveilling your employees threatens the functioning of your agency and potentially the freedom of the press guaranteed by our Constitution," the lawmakers, led by Pallone, wrote to Pruitt. The letter gives Pruitt until Jan. 19 to respond to a series of questions related to Definers role at the agency. Read it [here](#).

BISHOP'S STANDING INVITE: House Natural Resources Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) offered up a standing invitation to Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard, after he declined an invitation to testify. "Despite your apparent refusal to engage with those who see the world differently than you, I remain committed to hearing all voices and perspectives," Bishop wrote in a Friday [letter](#).

THE SAUDI ARABIA OF SOLAR: A [new report](#) from the Institute for Energy Economics & Financial Analysis zeros in on the Southwest's potential for solar development, particularly in northeast Arizona. The Navajo Nation, the report finds, "is at the center of a region that stands to become a major source of solar-powered generation as part of a trend in which solar is capturing a growing piece of U.S. power-generation markets."

MOVER, SHAKER: Zachary Kahan is joining the House Energy & Commerce Committee staff as the Democratic outreach and member services coordinator. He was previously the advocacy and PAC manager for the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (h/t POLITICO Influence).

- **Kateri Callahan is leaving the** Alliance to Save Energy after 14 years as its president for a yet-to-be-announced efficiency job in the private sector. ASE announced Friday it begins a national search for her replacement.

QUICK HITS

- Iranian oil tanker collides with freighter off China; 32 crew members missing. [Globe and Mail](#).
- Nearly 200 nations promise to stop ocean plastic waste, [Reuters](#).
- Pennsylvania Coal Mine To Close. [NPR](#).
- Sununu opposes Trump administration's offshore drilling plan. [AP](#).
- Trump plan to expand oil and gas leasing in West draws, for the most part, a big yawn from industry. [Los Angeles Times](#).

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

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EPA Morning News Highlights 11.14.17

Center for Accountability in Science: Dr. Dourson is a Seasoned Toxicologist. Why Don't Environmental Groups Support His EPA Nomination?

Major media coverage of President Trump's nominations to the Environmental Protection Agency is enough to make any professional scientist's head spin. The New York Times last month criticized Dr. Nancy Beck, nominated as a senior EPA administrator, for having a different professional opinion from some of her peers at the EPA. NBC News recently called Dr. Michael Dourson, nominated to head the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, a "Toxic Chemical Swamp Creature." The news stories appear to be taking their cues from radical environmental groups, like EWG and NRDC, which are solidly in the "all chemicals are bad under every circumstance" camp.

E&E News: Bill Wehrum is sworn in as air chief

Four days after narrowly winning Senate confirmation, Bill Wehrum was sworn in today as U.S. EPA air chief. The private swearing-in by Administrator Scott Pruitt was announced in an internal email by EPA Chief of Staff Ryan Jackson. "Bill comes to the agency with years of institutional knowledge that will help guide him through administering air quality issues for all Americans, and his experience will be vital to the agency's mission to bring about regulatory reforms," Jackson said in the message to EPA employees. Wehrum will oversee the Office of Air and Radiation, which as of December had almost 1,100 employees, according to figures recently released by EPA in response to a Freedom of Information Act request. But while no one questions his expertise in Clean Air Act issues, Wehrum also carries baggage from his work in private practice representing companies and industry trade groups that regularly challenge EPA regulations

Hendersonville News: EPA Assists North Carolina in Preventing Water Pollution

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently awarded \$3,766,800 to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to support management of nonpoint sources of water pollution. The funding will be used for a variety of projects designed to improve water

quality in priority watersheds across the state. “Improving the Nation’s water is one of EPA’s highest priorities under the Trump Administration,” said Scott Pruitt, Administrator. “This grant funds state-led programs that are working for communities throughout North Carolina.” Nonpoint-source pollution (NPS) is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over the ground.

Bega District News: EPA continues ‘complex’ investigation into illegal logging claims

The NSW Environment Protection Authority is continuing its investigation into alleged illegal state forest logging in Tantawangalo. EPA officers inspected logged areas of Tantawangalo State Forest, assessing rocky outcrops and cliff landscape features as part of the ongoing investigation, following complaints by South East Forest Rescue in 2016. “The investigation is complex, covering a large area and is currently ongoing,” an EPA spokesperson said. The agency raised concerns with Forestry Corporation NSW following a compliance operation in March this year. “We advised the Forestry Corporation of NSW of concerns with identifying rocky outcrops and their boundaries and encouraged them to improve their practices,” the EPA said at the time.

Taiwan News: China blocks Taiwan EPA head from attending UNFCCC COP 23

The United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Bonn, Germany will last from the 6th until the 17th of November. China has continued to block Taiwan in the international arena and barred Taiwan's head of the environmental department from joining either a main or side event this year. Despite the pressure from China, Lee Ying-yuan (李應元), the Minister of Environmental Protection Administration and the head of Taiwanese delegation, has successfully managed to meet Germany's environment officials, President of Taiwan's Pacific ally Hilda Heine, Tuvalu Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga, and environmental department heads of other countries outside the event. The 23rd Conference of Parties (COP 23) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, is taking place in Bonn, Germany, presided over by the Government of Fiji.

National Morning News Highlights 11.14.17

The Wall Street Journal: Three UCLA Basketball Players Set to Leave China

Three UCLA basketball players detained for a week in China were set to fly back home late Tuesday, hours after U.S. President Donald Trump said he had requested assistance on their behalf from his counterpart Xi Jinping. UCLA freshmen LiAngelo Ball, Jalen Hill and Cody Riley were seen late Tuesday at Shanghai’s Pudong International Airport checking into a Delta flight bound for Los Angeles, airline staff said. Their departure came after a week of tension, with the players detained by police in the eastern city Hangzhou as suspects in an investigation of suspected shoplifting from a Louis Vuitton boutique. Ending his trip to Asia on Tuesday, Mr.

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that in recent days he asked the Chinese president for help. Mr. Trump called the incident “unfortunate” but said he had had “a great conversation” about the players with China’s leader. “President Xi has been terrific on that subject,” he said.

The Washington Post: Sessions considering second special counsel to investigate Republican concerns, letter shows

Attorney General Jeff Sessions is entertaining the idea of appointing a second special counsel to investigate a host of Republican concerns — including alleged wrongdoing by the Clinton Foundation and the controversial sale of a uranium company to Russia — and has directed senior federal prosecutors to explore at least some of the matters and report back to him and his top deputy, according to a letter obtained by The Washington Post. The revelation came in a response by the Justice Department to an inquiry from House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), who in July and again in September called for Sessions to appoint a second special counsel to investigate concerns he had related to the 2016 election and its aftermath.

The Hill: Trump faces big choice on Moore’s fate

President Trump is set to play a decisive role in the Republican battle over Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore — if he chooses to do so. Trump, who so far has declined to directly address the allegations against Moore, is facing pressure from both sides. Senate Republicans signaled on Monday that they want nothing to do with Moore and will work to prevent his seating, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) saying he believed Moore’s accusers. Key parts of Trump’s political base, however, are sticking with the former chief justice of Alabama’s state Supreme Court. Breitbart News and Trump’s former White House strategist and political guru Stephen Bannon are both fighting for Moore, who remains the favorite in Alabama — a state Trump won in last year’s election by 28 points.

TRUMP TWEETS

Center for Accountability in Science

<https://www.accountablesience.com/michael-dourson-is-a-seasoned-toxicologist-why-arent-environmental-groups-supporting-his-epa-nomination/>

Dr. Dourson is a Seasoned Toxicologist. Why Don’t Environmental Groups Support His EPA Nomination?

By CAS Staff, 11/13/17

Major media coverage of President Trump's nominations to the Environmental Protection Agency is enough to make any professional scientist's head spin.

The New York Times last month criticized Dr. Nancy Beck, nominated as a senior EPA administrator, for having a different professional opinion from some of her peers at the EPA. NBC News recently called Dr. Michael Dourson, nominated to head the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, a "Toxic Chemical Swamp Creature."

The news stories appear to be taking their cues from radical environmental groups, like EWG and NRDC, which are solidly in the "all chemicals are bad under every circumstance" camp. But that viewpoint certainly isn't backed by scientists. Researchers with George Mason University found that close to 80 percent of Society of Toxicology members believe the Environmental Working Group, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Center for Science in the Public Interest overstate the risks of chemicals.

As our chief science officer Dr. Joseph Perrone wrote in a recent op-ed, the David and Goliath story of environmental heroes versus the Big Bad Industry reduces complex issues of toxicity into headline-generating news of little substance.

Let's look at Dr. Dourson as an example.

As a toxicologist with 40 years' experience working for the Environmental Protection Agency, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, and the nonprofit Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment (TERA), Dr. Dourson is far more qualified to head his office than some of the President's nominees to other executive departments.

During his time at the EPA, Dr. Dourson was one of the founders of the agency's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS), a program that identifies and characterizes the health hazards of chemicals in the environment. When Dr. Dourson moved on from the agency in the mid-90's, he

developed an improved version of the database, called the International Toxicity Estimates for Risk (ITER). ITER compiles data on the human health risks of chemicals, and compares the risk assessments of international groups like the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Canada, and the Netherlands' RIVM.

It's such a good database, in fact, that The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Toxicology Data Network (TOXNET) includes ITER in its list of reference databases for public use. It provides free, easily accessible information for students, researchers, government agencies and even the rogue environmental groups who want to see its founder sidelined from the work of toxicology.

As far as Dr. Dourson's reputation among professional scientists goes, look no further than the EPA's own announcement of his nomination, which included more than a half dozen endorsements from professors, public servants, and the Editor-in-Chief of an international toxicology journal.

So the reports which claim that private sector scientists are unable to contribute to the body of scientific knowledge in a positive way? They're weak arguments at best, and intentionally misleading at worst.

For us, the day Dr. Dourson is no longer certified by the American Board of Toxicology, or shirks his fellowships to both the Academy of Toxicological Sciences and the Society for Risk Analysis is the day we believe public health is no longer his primary interest.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/11/13/stories/1060066391>

Bill Wehrum is sworn in as air chief

By Sean Reilly, 11/13/17

Four days after narrowly winning Senate confirmation, Bill Wehrum was sworn in today as U.S.

EPA air chief.

The private swearing-in by Administrator Scott Pruitt was announced in an internal email by EPA Chief of Staff Ryan Jackson.

"Bill comes to the agency with years of institutional knowledge that will help guide him through administering air quality issues for all Americans, and his experience will be vital to the agency's mission to bring about regulatory reforms," Jackson said in the message to EPA employees.

Wehrum will oversee the Office of Air and Radiation, which as of December had almost 1,100 employees, according to figures recently released by EPA in response to a Freedom of Information Act request.

But while no one questions his expertise in Clean Air Act issues, Wehrum also carries baggage from his work in private practice representing companies and industry trade groups that regularly challenge EPA regulations.

As recently as this morning, his profile page was still posted on the website of his former firm, Hunton & Williams LLP, although it has since been taken down. Wehrum had previously told EPA he would avoid participating in matters involving former clients for a year after last providing a service.

Also trained as an environmental engineer, Wehrum previously worked in the Office of Air and Radiation as counsel from 2001 to 2005 during the George W. Bush administration. He then served as acting chief for two years, but Senate Democrats at the time blocked his bid to get the job permanently.

In this round, President Trump nominated Wehrum to head the air office in early September. He won Senate confirmation Thursday by a 49-47 vote that fell almost exactly along party lines. With Pruitt, he is now one of two Senate-confirmed appointees at EPA.

In the interim, Sarah Dunham, a career employee, had been serving as acting head of the air office.

Hendersonville News

<http://www.hendersonville.com/news/2017/11/epa-assists-north-carolina-preventing-water-pollution/>

EPA Assists North Carolina in Preventing Water Pollution

By Staff, 11/13/17

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently awarded \$3,766,800 to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to support management of nonpoint sources of water pollution.

The funding will be used for a variety of projects designed to improve water quality in priority watersheds across the state.

“Improving the Nation’s water is one of EPA’s highest priorities under the Trump Administration,” said Scott Pruitt, Administrator. “This grant funds state-led programs that are working for communities throughout North Carolina.”

Nonpoint-source pollution (NPS) is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over the ground. This runoff picks up natural and man-made pollutants as it flows, eventually depositing the material into lakes, rivers, and groundwater. This type of pollution can be difficult to manage since it cannot be traced to a specific source. Controlling nonpoint source pollution is especially important since one in three Americans get their drinking water from public systems that rely on seasonal and rain-dependent streams.

North Carolina has identified more than 40 watersheds across the state as priorities for restoration using 319 grant funds. EPA’s grant will help North Carolina fund NPS management projects and programs including:

- Local watershed planning and restoration;
 - Water quality monitoring;
 - Ground water protection;
 - Forestry management;
 - Agricultural management;

- Erosion and sediment control;
- Septic tank management;
- Nutrient reductions; and
- Permitting and Enforcement.

Nonpoint sources of pollution continue to be recognized as the nation's largest remaining cause of surface water quality impairments. It can contribute to problems like harmful algal blooms, erosion, and bacteria contamination of surface and groundwater.

Nonpoint sources of pollution include agricultural runoff, urban runoff, abandoned mine drainage, failing on-site disposal systems, and pollution caused by changes to natural stream channels. Congress enacted Section 319 of the Clean Water Act in 1987 to control nonpoint sources of water pollution. Through Section 319, EPA provides states with grant funding to implement their nonpoint source programs and to support local watershed projects to improve water quality.

Taiwan News

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3296537>

By Eric Kao, 11/13/17

The United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Bonn, Germany will last from the 6th until the 17th of November. China has continued to block Taiwan in the international arena and barred Taiwan's head of the environmental department from joining either a main or side event this year.

Despite the pressure from China, Lee Ying-yuan (李應元), the Minister of Environmental Protection Administration and the head of Taiwanese delegation, has successfully managed to meet Germany's environment officials, President of Taiwan's Pacific ally Hilda Heine, Tuvalu Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga, and environmental department heads of other countries outside the event.

The 23rd Conference of Parties (COP 23) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, is taking place in Bonn, Germany, presided over by the Government of Fiji. The main focus of the conference will be the implementation and enforcement of the Paris Climate Agreement, which was first adopted by consensus in December 2015.

The subject of climate change is of crucial importance to the survival of all mankind, even

though Taiwan is still not a member of the United Nations, its delegation group is still relatively large. It consists of government officials and specialists from different government agencies, including the Central Weather Bureau, Council of Agriculture, Water Resource Agency, as well as representatives from the cities of New Taipei, Kaohsiung, and Tainan. They have scheduled to participate in multilateral or bilateral talks with the other attending countries.

The Central News Agency reported that Lee was forcibly denied entrance to the conference hall, due to the impeding of members of the Chinese delegation.

“Allowing Taiwan to participate in such important matters is the responsibility of the entire international society,” says Lee, obviously disappointed by the UN's inaction in the incident. Lee points out that Taiwan has an enormous population of 23 million people, its unquestionable existence is a clear justification of its ability and right to discuss such issues with other countries in the world.

“We do not want to call out names, but such a big country really doesn't have to act in such an ungenerous manner,” Lee adds.

Despite not being able to enter the conference hall, Lee still sought ways to improve diplomatic ties with the other attending countries by inviting world leaders and representatives to a luncheon held along the Rhine. President Hilda Heine of the Marshal Islands, Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga of Tuvalu and environment ministers from countries such as Honduras were among those who attended the luncheon.

Bega District News

<http://www.begadistrictnews.com.au/story/5056373/epa-continues-complex-investigation-into-illegal-logging-claims/> **EPA continues ‘complex’ investigation into illegal logging claims**

By Alasdair McDonald, 11/14/17

The NSW Environment Protection Authority is continuing its investigation into alleged illegal

state forest logging in Tantawangalo.

EPA officers inspected logged areas of Tantawangalo State Forest, assessing rocky outcrops and cliff landscape features as part of the ongoing investigation, following complaints by South East Forest Rescue in 2016.

“The investigation is complex, covering a large area and is currently ongoing,” an EPA spokesperson said.

The agency raised concerns with Forestry Corporation NSW following a compliance operation in March this year.

“We advised the Forestry Corporation of NSW of concerns with identifying rocky outcrops and their boundaries and encouraged them to improve their practices,” the EPA said at the time.

Forestry Corporation said they were “confident” all rocky outcrops within the compartment were being protected, yet did concede the interpretation surrounding the Threatened Species Licence for such areas is an issue.

“We are working with the EPA to make it less subjective,” production supervisor for Eden Amba Addinsall said.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/three-ucla-basketball-players-set-to-leave-china-1510663619>

Three UCLA Basketball Players Set to Leave China

By James Areddy, 11/14/17

Three UCLA basketball players detained for a week in China were set to fly back home late Tuesday, hours after U.S. President Donald Trump said he had requested assistance on their behalf from his counterpart Xi Jinping.

UCLA freshmen LiAngelo Ball, Jalen Hill and Cody Riley were seen late Tuesday at Shanghai's Pudong International Airport checking into a Delta flight bound for Los Angeles, airline staff said. Their departure came after a week of tension, with the players detained by police in the eastern city Hangzhou as suspects in an investigation of suspected shoplifting from a Louis Vuitton boutique.

Ending his trip to Asia on Tuesday, Mr. Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that in recent days he asked the Chinese president for help. Mr. Trump called the incident "unfortunate" but said he had had "a great conversation" about the players with China's leader. "President Xi has been terrific on that subject," he said.

— ADVERTISEMENT —

The shoplifting investigation took on outsize importance because the players are high-profile, especially Mr. Ball who comes from a prominent sports family with a brother in the NBA and a media-hungry father, and news of their troubles broke hours before Mr. Xi welcomed Mr. Trump on his first presidential visit to China.

In China, UCLA was the guest of Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. as part of a massive marketing campaign, which included a U.S. college basketball game on Saturday that was to be the three players' freshman debut.

After being taken to a police station on Tuesday after a reported theft of sunglasses at the Louis Vuitton boutique in Hangzhou the previous day, the trio was returned to the team's hotel. Along

with a few UCLA staff members, they spent the rest of the week nestled in a set of corner rooms on a VIP floor of the Hyatt Regency Hangzhou.

It is unclear what evidence Chinese police had about the apparent shoplifting or the result of the police investigation in Hangzhou.

In his comments, Mr. Trump issued what appeared to be a veiled admonishment to the players. “You know, you’re talking about very long prison sentences. They do not play games,” he said, apparently referring to Chinese judicial officials.

While it isn’t unusual for a U.S. president to raise legal cases involving Americans during meetings with Chinese officials, it isn’t clear whether Mr. Trump did so on other matters over the past week.

China’s Foreign Ministry has declined to comment on the case in recent days but last week said it would be handled according to law.

The rest of the UCLA players had returned to the U.S. after their game on Saturday. The university, which had said it was assisting Chinese authorities with their investigation, couldn’t immediately be reached for comment.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/sessions-considering-second-special-counsel-to-investigate-republican-concerns-letter-shows/2017/11/13/bc92ef3c-c8d2-11e7-b0cf-7689a9f2d84e_story.html?utm_term=.2099b38eac1a

Sessions considering second special counsel to investigate Republican concerns, letter shows

By Matt Zapposky, 11/13/17

Attorney General Jeff Sessions is entertaining the idea of appointing a second special counsel to investigate a host of Republican concerns — including alleged wrongdoing by the Clinton Foundation and the controversial sale of a uranium company to Russia — and has directed senior federal prosecutors to explore at least some of the matters and report back to him and his top deputy, according to a letter obtained by The Washington Post.

The revelation came in a response by the Justice Department to an inquiry from House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), who in July and again in September called for Sessions to appoint a second special counsel to investigate concerns he had related to the 2016 election and its aftermath.

The list of matters he wanted probed was wide ranging but included the FBI's handling of the investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while she was secretary of state, various dealings of the Clinton Foundation and several matters connected to the purchase of the Canadian mining company Uranium One by Russia's nuclear energy agency. Goodlatte took particular aim at former FBI director James B. Comey, asking for the second special counsel to evaluate the leaks he directed about his conversations with President Trump, among other things.

In response, Assistant Attorney General Stephen E. Boyd wrote that Sessions had “directed senior federal prosecutors to evaluate certain issues raised in your letters,” and that those prosecutors would “report directly to the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General, as appropriate, and will make recommendations as to whether any matters not currently under investigation should be opened, whether any matters currently under investigation require further resources, or whether any matters merit the appointment of a Special Counsel.”

Trump has repeatedly criticized his Justice Department for not aggressively probing a variety of conservative concerns. He said recently that officials there “should be looking at the Democrats” and that it was “very discouraging” they were not “going after Hillary Clinton.” On the campaign trail, Trump's supporters frequently chanted “Lock her up!” at the mention of Clinton's name.

“Hopefully they are doing something, and at some point, maybe we are going to all have it out,” Trump said recently.

Sessions's relationship with the president has been significantly strained since he recused himself from the investigation into possible coordination between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin to influence the 2016 election. The president has publicly lambasted his attorney general and noted that had he known in advance of Sessions's recusal, he would not have appointed him to the post. It was after Sessions's recusal that Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein appointed Robert S. Mueller III to lead the investigation into the Trump campaign and the Kremlin.

While the Justice Department is part of the executive branch — and the attorney general is appointed by and answers to the president — the White House generally provides input on broad policy goals and does not weigh in on criminal probes.

In that context, the letter is likely to be seen by some, especially on the left, as Sessions inappropriately bending to political pressure, perhaps to save his job. The possible reigniting of a probe of Clinton is likely to draw especially fierce criticism, even as it is welcomed by Trump's supporters.

When Trump said during the campaign that he would “instruct my attorney general to get a special prosecutor” to look into Clinton, former attorney general Michael Mukasey — a Trump supporter and vocal Clinton critic — said Trump having her investigated and jailed “would be like a banana republic.”

“Putting political opponents in jail for offenses committed in a political setting, even if they are criminal offenses — and they very well may be — is something that we don't do here,” he said.

Trump would later back down from his threats, before breathing life into them again with his more recent comments.

The Hill

Trump faces big choice on Moore's fate

By Jonathan Easley and Jordan Fabian, 11/14/17

President Trump is set to play a decisive role in the Republican battle over Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore — if he chooses to do so.

Trump, who so far has declined to directly address the allegations against Moore, is facing pressure from both sides.

Senate Republicans signaled on Monday that they want nothing to do with Moore and will work to prevent his seating, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) saying he believed Moore's accusers.

Key parts of Trump's political base, however, are sticking with the former chief justice of Alabama's state Supreme Court. Breitbart News and Trump's former White House strategist and political guru Stephen Bannon are both fighting for Moore, who remains the favorite in Alabama — a state Trump won in last year's election by 28 points.

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Trump's instincts would also appear to guide him toward Moore — despite the fact that he campaigned for the conservative's GOP opponent in the Republican primary.

“The challenge here is that Trump usually goes against what the establishment wants,” said a GOP strategist with close ties to the White House and Senate leadership.

Trump sided with McConnell in the GOP primary, where Moore defeated Sen. Luther Strange. Moore won days after Trump campaigned in Alabama on behalf of Strange and against the Bannon-backed Moore.

Yet Trump's embrace of Strange was hardly strong, either.

The president openly said at the event in Huntsville, Ala., that he might have been making a mistake in traveling to campaign in Alabama for Strange.

"If Luther doesn't win they're not going to say, we picked up 25 points in a short period of time," Trump said.

And he said that if Moore won, he'd be "campaigning like hell for him."

That, at least, seems like an impossibility given the allegations that Moore, at the age of 32 in 1979, had a sexual encounter with a 14-year-old.

On Monday, the controversy surrounding Moore deepened as a new accuser came forward alongside attorney Gloria Allred — who has represented dozens of women who have brought charges of sexual harassment or assault against famed men, including Trump. Beverly Young Nelson said Moore sexually assaulted her one night after work when she was 16 years old.

Moore had offered to give her a ride home after her shift at a local diner upon noticing that her boyfriend was running late to pick her up, according to Nelson's account.

But instead of driving her home, Nelson said he parked the car at the back of the restaurant, where "there were no lights," and began groping her.

"I was alarmed and I immediately asked him what he was doing," she said at a press conference.

"Instead of answering my question, Mr. Moore reached over and began groping me," she said,

adding that Moore reached over and locked the car door while she yelled at him to stop and continued to try to fight him off.

Moore then grabbed her neck and pushed her head toward his crotch, she said.

“I was terrified. He was also trying to pull my shirt off. I thought that he was going to rape me. ... I had tears running down my face,” she said.

Nelson said Moore eventually gave up and threatened that no one would believe her story. She said she kept quiet for fear he would retaliate.

Moore’s campaign released a statement maintaining his innocence and blasting Allred.

“Gloria Allred is a sensationalist leading a witch hunt, and she is only around to create a spectacle,” Moore’s Senate campaign chairman Bill Armistead said in a statement.

“We’ve said this before and we’ll say it again: Judge Moore is an innocent man and has never had any sexual misconduct with anyone,” he added.

It’s possible Allred’s entry into the Alabama story could push Trump toward Moore.

The worst thing for the establishment, one GOP source said, was that Allred convened Monday’s press conference.

“Trump hates Gloria Allred after what she did to him during the election. So I don’t know. You could see him siding with Bannon against the establishment crowd, but maybe his tripwire in going against what Bannon is pushing for is the fact that kids are involved. I don’t know. It’s not good.”

Some Trump supporters say it makes sense for the White House to keep its powder dry on Moore's candidacy, while at the same time distancing itself from the Senate candidate.

"This is a no-win situation and the worst thing the White House could do is take ownership of the situation," said Barry Bennett, a former Trump adviser. "You just have to express publicly the seriousness of the charges and allow Alabama voters to make their choice."

Notably, the Republican National Committee, which is closely aligned with Trump, had not cut ties with Moore as of Monday evening.

If additional accusers come forward, it could close off any viable path to victory for Moore and force him from the race while saving Trump from wading into a nasty intraparty fight.

Trump's own past battles over reports of misconduct also could play into his thinking.

The president survived the "Access Hollywood" scandal involving his past lewd remarks about women just a month before Election Day 2016. Multiple women then came forward accusing Trump of sexual assault, allegations that the president has denied. If Trump came down hard on Moore, it could open the president up to charges of hypocrisy.

Bannon and his allies are aggressively seeking to tamp down the controversy around Moore by discrediting his accusers and suggesting that Democrats or establishment Republicans are behind the attacks.

"I think there's going to be some pretty interesting stories about how that information got dropped and who paid for it and who weaponized it," Bannon said in a speech to The Citadel Republican Society over the weekend.

Moore is already fundraising off that notion.

“According to sources, establishment Republicans are colluding with the Obama-Clinton Machine behind-the-scenes in a desperate effort to sabotage my campaign and keep me out of Washington,” Moore wrote in a campaign mailer that was sent out with the subject line: “McConnell’s dirty plot to destroy me.”

The White House was quiet about the story on Monday, but remarks the day before on NBC’s “Meet the Press” from legislative director Marc Short reflected the tightrope it has sought to walk so far.

Short said that “no Senate seat is more important than the notion of child pedophilia.”

But he also praised Moore as “somebody who graduated from West Point, he served our country in Vietnam, he’s been elected multiple times statewide in Alabama.”

“The people in Alabama know Roy Moore better than we do here in D.C., and I think we have to be very cautious ... of allegations that are 40 years old that arise a month before Election Day,” Short said.

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Timothy Cama
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 4:54:02 PM
Subject: Senators' letter on Definers contract

Hey folks-

Do you want to comment on this letter asking EPA to terminate the Definers Public Affairs Contract? <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4332897-Whitehouse-and-Harris-letter-to-EPA.html>

Thanks.

--

Timothy Cama, Staff writer
The Hill
(202) 695-6245
Secure: timothy.cama@protonmail.com

Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Lisa Friedman
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 3:21:20 PM
Subject: Re: Follow up question on MJ story

And why was this a no-bid contract when other companies perform the same service?

Lisa Friedman
Reporter, The New York Times
202-862-0306 office
202-251-2083 cell
Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com
Twitter: @LFFriedman

On Dec 15, 2017, at 10:20 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Lisa Friedman [<mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:15 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Follow up question on MJ story

Hello,

Can you please provide a comment about why the news compilation that Definers has been hired to do can not be performed in house?

Secondly - were there any issues with Bulletin that caused EPA to switch providers for this service?

Third, as there are clearly other companies that perform this work – – like the one EPA had previously contracted with – – can you please provide an explanation of why this was a no-bid contract.

Thank you,

Lisa

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, The New York Times

202-862-0306 office

202-251-2083 cell

Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com

Twitter: @LFFriedman

To: Pace, Julie[JPace@ap.org]; Biesecker, Michael[MBiesecker@ap.org]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 5:41:25 PM
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

One more quote ...

“A similar security sweep was done for EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 12:29 PM
To: 'Pace, Julie' <JPace@ap.org>; 'Biesecker, Michael' <MBiesecker@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Julie and Michael -

Below are our on-the-record responses in bold that you can attribute to me.

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 11:47 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Bug sweeping, biometric locks

Liz, Jahan,

AP will be publishing a story about \$3,000 in taxpayer funds expended in April for a contractor to sweep Administrator Pruitt's office for electronic listening devices. We will also be reporting on spending to install biometric locks in his suite.

When coupled with the previously reported purchase of the privacy booth, it raises questions about why Pruitt feels the need to invest in courier-surveillance measures that none of his

predecessors felt were necessary. EPA headquarters is a secure building with armed security and metal detectors at the entrances. Pruitt also has his personal security detail. Is the administrator concerned about the potential for electronic spying against him by the agency's own employees?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA’s Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

As part of the same story, we will also be mentioning the \$120,000 Definers contract and the FOIAs filed by America Rising targeted at EPA employees viewed as potentially disloyal to the Trump administration. Please provide any comment you have on those issues.

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael

AP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Have a tip for the Associated Press? We have a secure way to send it to us, anonymously. Follow this link for instructions: www.ap.org/tips

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“There are only two forces that can carry light to all corners of the globe – the sun in the heavens and The Associated Press down here.” -- – Mark Twain, 1906

“I go with Custer and will be at the death.” – AP reporter Mark Kellogg’s final dispatch from the Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1876

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Bolen, Brittany
Sent: Thur 1/4/2018 6:23:39 PM
Subject: Can they just use the 3rd pic? 3 is too many. Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 4, 2018, at 1:13 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

ENGAGED -- Brittany Bolen, EPA's deputy associate administrator for policy and a Senate EPW alum, got engaged last weekend to **David Dimock**, a Deloitte consultant, on a ski trip in Park City, Utah. The couple met in D.C., and he proposed on a footbridge next to the Town Lift in Park City. **Pics**
<http://bit.ly/2IXIQVu> ... <http://bit.ly/2E4uY2v> ... <http://bit.ly/2CD8Qip>

From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman [<mailto:politicoplaybook@politico.com>]
Sent: Thursday, January 4, 2018 1:11 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by Better Medicare Alliance: TRUMP threatens WOLFF with lawsuit -- SESSIONS' bad day: MEADOWS and JORDAN call on him to resign while GARDNER slams his pot decision -- DoJ looking at CLINTON'S EMAILS again

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by Better Medicare Alliance

Good Thursday afternoon. GOP RETAINS CONTROL OF VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES AFTER RANDOM DRAW -- Kevin Robillard: "The state elections board chairman pulled a film canister out of a ceramic bowl containing the name of Republican David Yancey, giving him the victory over Democrat Shelly Simonds. Each received 11,608 votes in the race for a Newport News-based seat in the Virginia legislature's lower chamber. Yancey's victory will give the GOP a 51-49 advantage in the House of Delegates." <http://politi.co/2CqqXF8>

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST ... MISSISSIPPI REP. GREGG HARPER TO

RETIRE -- @samrhall: "BREAKING: A source close to U.S. Rep. Gregg Harper confirmed the #MS03 congressman will not seek re-election for a sixth term. Official announcement expected this afternoon."

THE NEXT TURN OF THE SCREW IN TRUMP V. BANNON -- "Trump lawyer sends

'cease and desist' letter to 'Fire and Fury' author, publisher," by Cristiano Lima: "A legal representative for President Donald Trump on Thursday called for the author and publisher of a forthcoming book on the White House to 'immediately cease and desist' from releasing it, alleging it contains libelous and defamatory information."

"In a letter addressed to Michael Wolff and Steve Rubin, the writer and the president of the book's publisher, Henry Holt and Co., lawyer Charles Harder said his team was 'investigating numerous false and/or baseless statement' made about the president in the upcoming book, 'Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House.' Harder wrote that publishing the book would be tantamount to 'defamation by libel' and called on Rubin and Wolff to halt distribution of the book, which is set to be released next Tuesday."

"Mr. Trump hereby demands that you immediately cease and desist from any further publication, release or dissemination of the Book,' Harder wrote. Representatives for Wolff and Henry Holt and Co. did not immediately respond for comment."

<http://politi.co/2Cqn8zA> ... **The full letter** <http://politi.co/2CqOqpD>

LET'S BE CLEAR -- Trump's scorched earth strategy against Steve Bannon and the decision to send cease and desist letters to Bannon along with Wolff and his publisher is not about finding victory in the court of law and stopping this book from being sold. If anything, it is serving as a boon to Wolff and his book sales. Right now, his book is No. 1 on Amazon's bestseller list. **REMEMBER:** Trump has long threatened people with lawsuits that ultimately fizzled out. Remember when Trump said he was going to sue The New York Times and "open up" libel laws to sue other media organizations?

TRUMP TO REPORTERS TODAY, when asked about Bannon in Roosevelt Room, per pooler David Smith of The Guardian: "He called me a great man last night so, you know, he obviously changed his tune pretty quick. ... I don't talk to him. That's just a misnomer."

THE PRESIDENT'S DEFENDERS -- CHRIS RUDDY on Newsmax:

<http://nws.mx/2CELNUM>

A CLASSIC TRUMP PIVOT -- WHAT HE'D RATHER TALK ABOUT --

@realDonaldTrump at 6:32 a.m.: "With all of the failed 'experts' weighing in, does anybody really believe that talks and dialogue would be going on between North and South Korea right now if I wasn't firm, strong and willing to commit our total 'might' against the North. Fools, but talks are a good thing!" ... **at 6:37 a.m.**, quote-tweeting a picture of a family at a military ceremony with the caption "this is why we stand": "So

beautiful....Show this picture to the NFL players who still kneel!"

HOW WOLFF WROTE THE BOOK -- "'You Can't Make This S--- Up': My Year Inside Trump's Insane White House," in The Hollywood Reporter: "After the election, I proposed to him that I come to the White House and report an inside story for later publication -- journalistically, as a fly on the wall -- which he seemed to misconstrue as a request for a job. No, I said. I'd like to just watch and write a book. 'A book?' he responded, losing interest. 'I hear a lot of people want to write books,' he added, clearly not understanding why anybody would. 'Do you know Ed Klein?'-- author of several virulently anti-Hillary books. 'Great guy. I think he should write a book about me.' But sure, Trump seemed to say, knock yourself out.

"Since the new White House was often uncertain about what the president meant or did not mean in any given utterance, his non-disapproval became a kind of passport for me to hang around -- checking in each week at the Hay-Adams hotel, making appointments with various senior staffers who put my name in the 'system,' and then wandering across the street to the White House and plunking myself down, day after day, on a West Wing couch. ...

"Politics is a game, of course, of determined role-playing, but the difficulties of staying in character in the Trump White House became evident almost from the first day. 'You can't make this s*** up,' Sean Spicer, soon to be portrayed as the most hapless man in America, muttered to himself after his tortured press briefing on the first day of the new administration, when he was called to justify the president's inaugural crowd numbers - and soon enough, he adopted this as a personal mantra." ***Plus more details on the White House power struggle, how the staff feels about Trump and Sean Hannity providing questions ahead of time to the White House***

<http://bit.ly/2IVcdqX>

-- **MORE FROM WOLFF IN GQ UK** on Bannon, Roger Ailes, Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity plotting a new conservative media empire, Trump's decision to skip the White House Correspondents' Dinner, his relationship with Kellyanne Conway, Hope Hicks and other women and more. ***Plus the detail that Tucker Carlson was offered press secretary*** <http://bit.ly/2CSVjkz>

-- **Axios' Mike Allen:** "Michael Wolff has tapes to back up quotes in his incendiary book -- dozens of hours of them. Among the sources he taped, I'm told, are Bannon and former White House deputy chief of staff Katie Walsh." <http://bit.ly/2CnouLA>

DRILL, BABY, DRILL -- "Trump administration to push for oil drilling off Pacific, Atlantic, Florida coasts," by Ben Lefebvre: "The Trump administration is expected to announce Thursday that it will propose opening up nearly all federal waters for oil and gas drilling, giving the energy industry access to fields in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans and the eastern Gulf of Mexico that have been off limits for decades, according to two sources familiar with the plan. The expansion is likely to trigger huge political backlash, particularly on the West Coast and in Florida, where offshore drilling has generated

sharp opposition from residents, environmental groups and businesses who fear a spill like BP's in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 could devastate beaches and destroy the tourist industry that is vital to the regional economies." <http://politi.co/2Co1OLf>

GOOD SIGN FOR GOVERNMENT FUNDING -- @seungminkim: "Big Four meeting must've been actually somewhat productive. McConnell today on floor: 'I'm optimistic we can begin 2018 with a bipartisan two-year funding agreement that meets several critically important objectives.'"

ABOUT THOSE EMAILS -- THE DAILY BEAST'S BETSY WOODRUFF -- "Justice Department 'Looking Into' Hillary Clinton's Emails -- Again": "Justice Department officials are taking a fresh look at Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state, The Daily Beast has learned.

"An ally of Attorney General Jeff Sessions who is familiar with the thinking at the Justice Department's Washington headquarters described it as an effort to gather new details on how Clinton and her aides handled classified material. Officials' questions include how much classified information was sent over Clinton's server; who put that information into an unclassified environment, and how; and which investigators knew about these matters and when. The Sessions ally also said officials have questions about immunity agreements that Clinton aides may have made."
<http://thebea.st/2CRyGxa>

***** **A message from Better Medicare Alliance: HEALTH CARE POLICY ALERT:**
We can all agree that high need, high cost patients deserve the best care. And with Medicare Advantage, seniors and people with disabilities are getting the high-value care they need through flexible benefits and specialized care. Learn more:
<http://bettermedicarealliance.org> *****

PAGING CALIFORNIA -- "U.S. to end policy that let legal pot flourish," by the AP's Sadie Gurman: "Attorney General Jeff Sessions is rescinding the Obama-era policy that had paved the way for legalized marijuana to flourish in states across the country, two people with knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press. Sessions will instead let federal prosecutors where pot is legal decide how aggressively to enforce federal marijuana law, the people said." <http://bit.ly/2CS5uGh>

-- **@SenCoryGardner:** "[@realDonaldTrump](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/811111111111111111) had it right. This must be left up to the states. ... This reported action directly contradicts what Attorney General Sessions told me prior to his confirmation. With no prior notice to Congress, the Justice Department has trampled on the will of the voters in CO and other states. ... I am prepared to take all steps necessary, including holding DOJ nominees, until the Attorney General lives up to the commitment he made to me prior to his confirmation." ... **@LisaMurkowski:** "Today's announcement is disruptive to state regulatory regimes and regrettable." **Full statement** <http://bit.ly/2IVMgXV>

SIREN -- Op-ed from REPS. MARK MEADOWS (R-N.C.) and JIM JORDAN (R-OHIO)

in the Washington Examiner: **"It's time for Jeff Sessions to go, as shown by the latest FBI leak"**: "Attorney General Jeff Sessions has recused himself from the Russia investigation, but it would appear he has no control at all of the premier law enforcement agency in the world. It is time for Sessions to start managing in a spirit of transparency to bring all of this improper behavior to light and stop further violations. If Sessions can't address this issue immediately, then we have one final question needing an answer: When is it time for a new attorney general? Sadly, it seems the answer is now." <http://washex.am/2CS6WbC>

HEADLINES THE PRESIDENT WILL LIKE -- Reuters: "U.S. private sector adds 250,000 jobs in December, biggest rise since March": "U.S. private employers added 250,000 jobs in December, marking the biggest monthly increase since March, a report by ADP Research Institute showed on Thursday. Economists surveyed by Reuters had forecast the ADP National Employment Report would show a gain of 190,000 jobs, with estimates ranging from 165,000 to 225,000." <http://reut.rs/2CSCazm>

-- "The Dow Jones industrial average tops 25,000 for first time, continuing its history-making rise," by WaPo's Renae Merle <http://wapo.st/2CS3H3W>

WHERE'S EVERYONE GOING? -- ISAAC DOVERE talks to lawmakers who are leaving Congress, with portraits by **BEN BAKER** in POLITICO Magazine <http://politi.co/2CnDtVL>

ON THE WORLD STAGE -- "Trump, South Korea's Moon agree to suspend military drills during Olympics," by CNN's Angela Dewan <http://cnn.it/2CRbZJj>

-- "When a North Korean Missile Accidentally Hit a North Korean City," by The Diplomat's Ankit Panda and Dave Schmerler: "What happens when a North Korean ballistic missile test fails in flight and explodes in a populated area? On April 28, 2017, North Korea launched a single Hwasong-12/KN17 intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) from Pukchang Airfield in South Pyongan Province (the Korean People's Army's Air and Anti-Air Force Unit 447 in Ryongak-dong, Sunchon City, to be more precise). That missile failed shortly after launch and crashed in the Chongsin-dong, in North Korean city of Tokchon, causing considerable damage to a complex of industrial or agricultural buildings." <http://bit.ly/2CSBA4L>

--DAVID CARDEN, former U.S. ambassador to ASEAN, in POLITICO Magazine, **"Why we need a new approach to North Korea:** It's time to stop focusing narrowly on a nuclear deal, and expand to address its broader problems": "The deep levels of distrust and enmity on both sides make it impossible to imagine reaching an agreement under the 'binary' conditions that currently exist, especially one that excludes most other global stakeholders. An expanded definition focused on development would put North Korea on a path to global engagement and prosperity, creating an alternative to the insular 'world of one' it now inhabits. Properly constructed, such a plan could also provide North Korea's leadership a high degree of security that regime change is not an international goal." <http://politi.co/2CGp4rr>

AFTERNOON READ -- "The Real Future of Work: Forget automation. The workplace is already cracking up in profound ways, and Washington is sorely behind on dealing with it," by Danny Vinik in POLITICO Magazine: "Over the past two decades, the U.S. labor market has undergone a quiet transformation, as companies increasingly forgo full-time employees and fill positions with independent contractors, on-call workers or temps -- what economists have called 'alternative work arrangements' or the 'contingent workforce.' Most Americans still work in traditional jobs, but these new arrangements are growing -- and the pace appears to be picking up. From 2005 to 2015, according to the best available estimate, the number of people in alternative work arrangements grew by 9 million and now represents roughly 16 percent of all U.S. workers, while the number of traditional employees declined by 400,000. A perhaps more striking way to put it is that during those 10 years, all net job growth in the American economy has been in contingent jobs.

"Around Washington, politicians often talk about this shift in terms of the so-called gig economy. But those startling numbers have little to do with the rise of Uber, TaskRabbit and other 'disruptive' new-economy startups. Such firms actually make up a small share of the contingent workforce. The shift ... is part of something much deeper and longer, touching everything from janitors and housekeepers to lawyers and professors." <http://politi.co/2CT34aI>

MEDIAWATCH -- Thomas Ricks, the Pulitzer Prize-winning military reporter and author, is joining Task & Purpose as a senior columnist.

-- HOT MEDIA JOBS: WSJ is hiring a Moscow bureau chief (<http://bit.ly/2CS7YVa>), **Yahoo News** is hiring a senior national affairs reporter (<http://bit.ly/2CsduMQ>) and **BuzzFeed News** is hiring a political reporter to cover Democrats (<http://bzfd.it/2Cs9dt3>).

SPORTS BLINK -- "Who Needs Trade Talks? These Days, General Managers Just Use Emojis," by NYT's James Wagner: "This is the 24/7 life of a modern baseball executive, who operates in a world where analytics have already altered the way rosters are constructed and in-game strategies are carried out. Technology has also altered how the sport's decision-makers with one another -- in humorous, contemporary ways. The haggling over the phone, or even in person, still goes on, of course, but is now being supplanted in part by more and more text messages, emojis and GIFs. Yes, even GIFs." <http://nyti.ms/2CRGUoF>

SPOTTED: Rep. George Holding (R-N.C.) in business class flying from RDU to Heathrow on Monday where he watched 'House of Cards' the entire six hour flight, per our source. ... **Rep. Warren Davidson (R-Ohio)**, a member of the Freedom Caucus, on the 8:35 a.m. American Airlines flight from D.C. to Dayton in the middle of a week off for the House.

TRUMP ALUMNI -- Tory Maguire Sendek has joined the law firm Michael Best as managing director, reporting to Reince Priebus. She was most recently at the White

House as a special assistant to the president and director of presidential scheduling.

TRANSITIONS -- Jacek Pruski has joined We The Action as managing director and general counsel and **Katie Waldo** has been named as chief operating officer. Pruski was formerly associate general counsel at the Obama-era Department of Education and Waldo was White House trip manager for the Obama administration. ... **Kate Childs Graham** joined West Wing Writers as a principal. She was previously communications director for Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.). ... **Christian Hertenstein** has joined Definers Public Affairs as vice president. He was previously at Qorvis MSLGROUP.

ENGAGED -- Brittany Bolen, EPA's deputy associate administrator for policy and a Senate EPW alum, got engaged last weekend to **David Dimock**, a Deloitte consultant, on a ski trip in Park City, Utah. The couple met in D.C., and he proposed on a footbridge next to the Town Lift in Park City. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2IXIQVu> ... <http://bit.ly/2E4uY2v> ... <http://bit.ly/2CD8Qip>

--OBAMA ALUMNI -- David Dietz, a social responsibility manager at the NBA and alum of the Obama White House and both Obama campaigns, last weekend proposed to **Anna Field**, a grad student at Northwestern studying mental health counseling. "They met at DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind. David proposed in their new apartment in Chicago and surprised Anna with her family at Quartino after!" **Instapic** <http://bit.ly/2E8vfl8>

***** **A message from Better Medicare Alliance: CONGRESS HAS UNFINISHED BUSINESS TO PROTECT MEDICARE ADVANTAGE SENIORS:** 19 million seniors and people with disabilities choose Medicare Advantage for one reason: it gives them the flexible, affordable, and robust health care they need. And with health needs in this country becoming more complex, it's clear that innovative, integrated solutions are required.

Better Medicare Alliance urges Congress to act quickly to enhance care for Medicare beneficiaries by approving the CHRONIC Care Act providing enhanced flexibility in supplemental benefit designs for high-cost, high-need beneficiaries and permanently reauthorization of Special Needs Plans (SNPs). And, Congress should vote to delay the Health Insurance Tax (HIT) to protect Medicare Advantage beneficiaries from unaffordable premium hikes.

Enrollment in Medicare Advantage and consumer satisfaction is growing. There is more evidence that Medicare Advantage is improving outcomes and leading efforts to implement innovations in delivery of care. Learn more: <http://bettermedicarealliance.org>

SUBSCRIBE to the Playbook family: **POLITICO Playbook** <http://politi.co/2lQswbh> ... **Playbook Power Briefing** <http://politi.co/2xuOiqh> ... **New York Playbook** <http://politi.co/1ON8bqW> ... **Florida Playbook** <http://politi.co/1OypFe9> ... **New Jersey Playbook** <http://politi.co/1HLKltF> ... **Massachusetts Playbook** <http://politi.co/1Nhtq5v>

... **Illinois Playbook** <http://politi.co/1N7u5sb> ... **California Playbook**
<http://politi.co/2bLvcPI> ... **London Playbook** <http://politi.co/2xfDPuK> ... **Brussels**
Playbook <http://politi.co/1FZeLcw> ... **All our political and policy tipsheets**
<http://politi.co/1M75UbX>

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To: AO OPA OMR CLIPS[AO_OPA_OMR_CLIPS@epa.gov]
From: Sorokin, Nicholas
Sent: Fri 10/6/2017 6:06:19 PM
Subject: NTK: Dem Senator Questions EPA Nominee's 'Heart', 10/6/17

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/dem-senator-questions-epa-nominees-heart/>

Dem Senator Questions EPA Nominee's 'Heart'

No Author Listed, 10/5/17

Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) questioned the "heart" of Trump EPA nominee Dr. Michael Dourson at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing on Wednesday.

"I always care about surrounding myself with people who have a good mind, but also a good heart, and there's no question you have a good mind," Carper said to Dourson.

The Delaware senator told the nominee that he does not question his intellectual credentials.

"There's a question about your heart," he added. "I don't mind people saying to me that they think I'm dumb. I don't like it, but what really hurts me is when they question my heart. And there's really serious questions about your heart."

Carper quoted Maya Angelou in criticizing Dourson, and told him that people are "afraid" of his nomination.

Dourson's nomination has received praise from medical and environmental professionals across the country. Officials from the University of Nebraska, Michigan State, and the University of Minnesota have all offered support to his nomination, yet Carper finds it appropriate to personally attack Dourson.

Nicholas Sorokin

Office of Media Relations Intern

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Telephone: (202) 564-5334

sorokin.nicholas@epa.gov

To: AO OPA Individual News Clips[AO_OPA_Ind_News_Clips@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Mon 2/26/2018 9:46:03 PM
Subject: San Francisco Chronicle: Cutbacks, policy shifts pummel morale at EPA office in SF, 2/23/18

San Francisco Chronicle

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/news/article/At-SF-s-leaderless-EPA-office-cutbacks-and-12705164.php>

Cutbacks, policy shifts pummel morale at EPA office in SF

By Peter Fimrite, 2/23/18, 5:40 PM

Lynda Deschambault knew her career at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had taken a hard turn in July when, she said, her supervisor told her during a performance review to “be as invisible as possible.” The next month, she took early retirement.

The request, she said, was jarring for a woman who had spent two decades enforcing pollution laws and the cleanup of toxic lands for the EPA’s Pacific Southwest region, based in San Francisco. Managing Superfund sites is not a position that lends itself to blending in.

“I’ve been through other administrations before, and we were always told to tighten our bootstraps and get to work. This was saying, ‘Well, don’t do your job,’” said Deschambault, who was the remediation manager at Leviathan Mine, an abandoned sulfur pit in Alpine County. “It was very surreal. I had never seen this before.”

More than a year into the Trump presidency, cuts to the EPA’s budget and the easing of regulations under Administrator Scott Pruitt have demoralized many workers in San Francisco-based Region 9, according to three current employees, a manager and a scientist who left in the past year, and five other former employees.

In interviews with The Chronicle, the workers described a situation in which managers, enforcement officers and scientists who take pride in their mission are being pushed out or shunted to the side. They said the tension is probably one reason Region 9 is the only one of the agency’s 10 offices still without a permanent leader.

“I’ve been here 31 years, and this is definitely the worst I’ve seen it in the EPA in terms of job security, staffing and just being able to do the work that the American people expect to protect the environment,” said Mark Sims, an engineer in the air enforcement division in Region 9 who spoke as a representative of the local chapter of the Engineers and Scientists of California union.

The White House said this month it is seeking to cut more than \$2.5 billion out of the agency’s budget. The proposal, for fiscal 2019, would shrink EPA spending by more than 23 percent. That would come on top of reductions carried out in 2017, when hundreds of employees, or roughly 5 percent, took buyouts and early retirement.

Pruitt, who declined to be interviewed, is engaged in a revamping of the EPA anchored in his belief that the agency has overstepped its congressional mandate, including when it began regulating heat-trapping greenhouse gases under President Barack Obama and hindered oil, gas and coal production in favor of renewable energy.

Pruitt, who as Oklahoma attorney general sued the agency 14 times, has denounced the “picking of winners and losers” and believes in a “lean” EPA using a collaborative regulatory system. A memo sent to regional administrators Jan. 2 said the priority is “a level playing field for regulated entities.” It urged EPA regulators to defer to the states on enforcement whenever possible.

“What’s happened over the last 10 years or so is that the agency evolved and morphed into something that was almost like a superagency,” Pruitt told the New York Times in a recent podcast. “I think the agency took the perspective ... that though we have been blessed with natural resources that help us literally feed the world and power the world, that we should not develop those resources.”

Central to Pruitt’s agenda — and particularly alarming to the current and former employees who spoke to The Chronicle — is his questioning of climate science. He acknowledged that the planet is warming in a recent television interview, but said it wasn’t “necessarily a bad thing,” despite evidence that warming could drive extreme weather events and coastal inundation from sea level rise. Pruitt has removed much of the information that the EPA had about climate change from the agency’s website.

The request for Deschambault to lie low came on top of a series of regulatory rollbacks and cost-cutting moves. In October, Pruitt announced his intention to repeal the Clean Power Plan, Obama's 2015 bid to curb power plants' release of greenhouse gases. He said the program had "weaponized" the agency.

Even without the budget cuts at the EPA, enforcement has suffered, critics say. A report released this month by the nonprofit Environmental Integrity Project, which pushes for strong enforcement of environmental laws, said that in the first 12 months of the Trump administration, the agency brought an average of 44 percent fewer civil cases than the previous three administrations did in the same time frame. The report said civil penalties paid by polluters declined 49 percent during the same period.

Deschambault and others said a malaise has gripped the EPA office at 75 Hawthorne St. in San Francisco, as managers are forced to tighten purse strings and limit inspections.

"Many inspectors have been discouraged from conducting inspections, and the attorneys who focus on enforcement have been moving away from it," said Taly Jolish, an EPA lawyer speaking in her capacity as the president of the local American Federation of Government Employees union. "It's depressing and discouraging ... we came to EPA to enforce the environmental laws of the United States, which have been the model for the world."

The 702 employees in Region 9 enforce federal regulations in California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, the Pacific islands and 148 tribal nations. The office has ordered California to re-examine rules that allowed oil companies to inject wastewater into aquifers, fined companies that polluted San Francisco Bay, forced the cleanup of rivers and creeks, and taken legal action against the Bureau of Indian Affairs for not providing adequate drinking water to schools on Indian land.

Environmental advocates say Pruitt's actions have decreased critical oversight of polluting industries.

“We don’t have a fully functioning agency and that’s intentional,” said Jared Blumenfeld, who ran the San Francisco office before stepping down as regional administrator in May 2016. He said Pruitt is “delivering on his promise: Don’t do enforcement so polluters can be left to pollute.”

Pruitt has said oversight remains strong, but now strictly follows federal law.

The San Francisco office employs about 250 fewer people than it did in 2010, Blumenfeld said. Records show about 700 employees nationwide have left the EPA since Trump was elected. Staffing is now roughly equivalent to the level in 1988, when 14,442 people worked for the agency. That’s about 3,000 less than were employed at the EPA a year into the administrations of Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said 400 workers took buyouts, including 11 in Region 9, a small percentage of those who were eligible. He disputed that the San Francisco office is beset by concern over the agency’s direction, saying, “Morale is great at EPA.”

Blumenfeld said 800 to 900 employees are needed to attend to all of the work in Region 9. Sims said that in addition to those who took buyouts, as many as 40 other San Francisco employees quit or retired last year. Pruitt’s plan, he said, is to cut 10 percent a year for the next three years in Region 9, eliminating 47 jobs in the coming fiscal year.

Those numbers are “not accurate,” Wilcox said without elaborating.

Environmental groups and Democratic politicians are afraid staffing nationwide will be decreased so much that it matches the early 1980s, when then-EPA administrator Anne Gorsuch cut the budget, feuded with employees and reduced cases against polluters. She resigned in 1983 after a scandal over the mismanagement of the Superfund program. There were fewer than 11,000 employees in the agency that year, according to EPA documents.

Pruitt’s critics fear he will end dozens of programs nationwide and virtually eliminate work related to climate change. They say deferring to states with varying environmental priorities will

make it more difficult for the EPA to hold polluters accountable.

The critics point to a recent settlement with Syngenta Seeds, which was accused of exposing workers in Hawaii to an insecticide. The EPA initially sought \$4.8 million after 10 workers at a farm on Kauai were hospitalized, but settled this month for \$150,000 while mandating a training program for growers.

“To reduce it by this amount is quite unusual,” said Judith Enck, a former EPA administrator in New York.

Pruitt has stated he wants to focus on Superfund cleanup and recently released a list of 21 sites targeted for immediate attention. The list included two of the 111 sites in Region 9. California has 98 Superfund sites, second in the nation to New Jersey.

One site on the list was ARCO’s abandoned Anaconda Copper Mine southeast of Reno. But instead of going forward with a remediation plan this month, Pruitt agreed, over the objections of nearby American Indian tribes and environmentalists, to delay a Superfund priority listing for at least four years.

“The first thing he did where an oil company is the polluter was say, ‘Oh, we won’t make it a Superfund site,’” said Kathy Setian, an environmental engineer who worked for 20 years as a Superfund project manager and left the agency in 2012. “It’s devastating. I feel like it is my life’s work that is being dismantled.”

Some project managers say regulations are being relaxed at many toxic sites, including Leviathan Mine, a 250-acre property in the Sierra abandoned in the early 1960s after sulfuric acid drained out and metals were detected in a creek and on Washoe Indian land. The state of California bought the site in 1983, and the Washoe asked the EPA to intervene 15 years later.

Oversight and the interpretation of data collected at the mine were curtailed last June as part of the lean management adopted by Pruitt. Deschambault said she was told to cut down on meetings and stop putting pressure on ARCO, which as a former site owner was handling cleanup, to

provide the EPA with sampling results.

When Deschambault pushed back, she said she was told a second site manager would be brought in to streamline the process. She said her supervisor had told her to be “invisible” out of helpless frustration and concern for her, not out of animosity. The agency did not allow the supervisor to respond to inquiries, but Deschambault said she was told her supervisor denied the charge after she included it in her resignation letter.

“We don’t have any information for you at this time,” Michele Huitric, a Region 9 spokeswoman, wrote in an email when asked about Deschambault’s allegations.

“We feel like the administrator is promoting the oil and gas industries and that he’s focused on limiting the work that we feel is important,” Jolish said. “He sees industry as our customer.”

Wilcox said that “Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”

Blumenfeld’s onetime deputy, Alexis Strauss, has been acting administrator for Region 9 for nearly two years. (She could not be reached for comment.) So far, none of Pruitt’s preferred candidates have agreed to take over an office in a left-leaning region populated by employees considered to be largely hostile to the administration’s views.

Ryan Flynn, an oil and gas lobbyist in New Mexico, recently became the second oil industry executive to turn down the job, the Los Angeles Times reported, citing EPA sources. Flynn, who was twice awarded the “Toxic Turkey” prize by the New Mexico Environmental Law Center, was not a popular choice among the rank and file, current and former Region 9 workers said.

Flynn, the executive director of the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association, told The Chronicle he “never aspired” to be the San Francisco office administrator.

“I admire EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and strongly believe in EPA’s mission to protect human health and the environment, however, my family is happily rooted in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and I am very satisfied with my current role,” he said in an email.

Managers and former employees said EPA staffers fear that resisting changes, or criticizing the leadership, will lead to being targeted by the administration.

The EPA gave a no-bid, \$120,000 contract to a Republican-linked opposition-research firm, Definers Public Affairs, and the the New York Times reported that one of its executives spent last year filing Freedom of Information Act requests while scouring the agency for “resistance” figures.

“People are so afraid of retribution,” Setian said. “They are trying to intimidate people.”

Wilcox, the EPA spokesman, said the firm was hired only to collect and categorize media reports for the agency. He denied the agency had sought to intimidate employees, but he acknowledged internal communications were subject to review.

“Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act,” he said, “and in terms of the FOIAs, nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”

Deschambault said it is clear to her that the agency’s watchdog role is broken.

“The people we used to regulate are now in charge,” she said.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Konkus, John
Sent: Thur 4/27/2017 8:25:41 PM
Subject: RE: Can we tweet this

EPA FACEBOOK

Under Administrator Scott Pruitt's leadership EPA is going in a new direction. Read about the changes we've made so far in this article on the Need To Know Network.

LINK: <http://ntknetwork.com/how-scott-pruitt-is-reshaping-the-epa-in-the-first-100-days/>

EPA TWITTER

Under @EPAScottPruitt's leadership EPA is going in a new direction. Read about the changes made so far on @NTKNet. <http://ntknetwork.com/how-scott-pruitt-is-reshaping-the-epa-in-the-first-100-days/>

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2017 3:57 PM
To: Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>
Subject: Can we tweet this

<http://ntknetwork.com/how-scott-pruitt-is-reshaping-the-epa-in-the-first-100-days/>

How Scott Pruitt is Reshaping the EPA in the First 100 Days

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor

Work Cell: 202.309.0934

Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Joe Pounder[jpounder@definerscorp.com]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 10/18/2017 8:13:50 PM
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

Guys we've been working on this since June. I don't know if the problem is with Definers or EPA but let's get this done, asap. No more delays.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 6:27 PM
To: Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

Great. Adding Nancy and Liz.

On Sep 28, 2017, at 4:11 PM, Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com> wrote:

We're fully registered...

<Screen Shot 2017-09-28 at 4.23.59 PM.png>

On Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 3:29 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

HI –

Working with contracts on this – here is the remaining issue that the contracting officer brought to me yesterday --

Specifically, the vendor is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). In order for any vendor to receive a contract from the federal government, they must be registered in this system. The vendor seems to be reluctant to register.

George had been working with the vendor on this. I have a call into the vendor as they may need assistance in completing the forms.

Will update you as soon as I hear from the vendor.

Thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:02 PM

To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>

Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Definers -- Clips

Importance: High

Where are we on this and when can we get this going? Today is a day where we could really use their help capturing clips in real time. This is very important and our wait and the process to do this has been way too long. Thank you!

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definercorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Jackie Toth
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:51:21 PM
Subject: Re: Q re: Definers contract

Thanks Jahan. Sorry, want to be clear here - background is fine for this bit - the EPA has canceled the contract effective today?

Jackie Toth
CQ Legal
Energy & Environment Reporter/Analyst
O: 202-650-6518
C: 610-428-2276
@JackieTothDC

On 19 December 2017 at 13:49, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Jackie Toth [mailto:jackietoht@cqrollcall.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:43 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Molly Block <Molly.Block@mail.house.gov>
Subject: Q re: Definers contract

Hi all,

Can we get confirmation that the EPA canceled the Definers contract? When will Definers' services be fully terminated? Does the EPA intend to issue a replacement contract, and will it be opened to a bid?

Deadline's no later than 3:30pm today, if possible.

Thanks much,
Jackie

Jackie Toth

CQ Legal

Energy & Environment Reporter/Analyst

O: 202-650-6518

C: 610-428-2276

@JackieTothDC

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com
Sent: Fri 12/1/2017 6:09:38 PM
Subject: Re:

Okay, but please do check. He has nothing to be afraid of. I am writing a piece that is totally balanced.

Have a good weekend. Thanks for the additional statement.

On Fri, Dec 1, 2017 at 8:22 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

I can check and circle back on Monday. Honestly we are full through mid-January (mostly because of the holidays).

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 1, 2017, at 10:16 AM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Fine, but how about an interview with him? I know you think I am writing a hit piece, but I am not. I wouldn't need an interview for that. I wouldn't have spoken to people in Oklahoma who say he is the best person they've ever worked for.

On Fri, Dec 1, 2017 at 8:13 AM Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

One more response you can use about your office ?

"Rather than getting in the weeds about process, Administrator Pruitt is meeting with top career staff at the lead inundated East Chicago Superfund site, Gold King Mine, San Jacinto Waste Pits and other polluted sites because this EPA is about achieving results." EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 17, 2017, at 10:15 AM, Alexander Nazaryan
<a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Enjoyed the Administrator's interview with the Washington Post.
Could we set something similar up for Newsweek?

On Thu, Nov 16, 2017 at 3:28 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We sent you an on-the-record statement in October and we will send you this on-the-record statement as well.

On-The-Record Statement ... “Administrator Pruitt has met with staff from every region and took the unprecedented step of meeting with EPA’s criminal investigators – a department that Obama slashed by 24 percent – about how we can work together to protect the environment and American jobs.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt.

‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation.

‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these

storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Have a good day Alexander and we look forward to reading your story.

Best,

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Alexander Nazaryan [<mailto:a.nazaryan@newsweek.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:08 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject:

Hi Jahan, I just want to make sure my requests are being taken seriously. That wasn't the impression I got when we spoke today.

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

--
Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer
Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

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Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

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Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer
Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Skolnik, Samuel[sskolnik@bgov.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 7:09:45 PM
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

It's also not accurate to call it a no-bid contract. Below is our statement about that as well:

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:09 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:08 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“The Definers contract is for news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:08 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:07 PM
To: 'Skolnik, Samuel' <sskolnik@bgov.com>
Subject: RE: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Skolnik, Samuel [<mailto:sskolnik@bgov.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:42 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Hi Jahan –

I just sent the following email to press@epa.gov, but wanted to make sure I got some kind of response today. My questions are regarding Definers Corp.

Any help appreciated,

Sam

--

Hi all. I cover federal contracting and procurement issues for Bloomberg Government, and am working on a daily story based off of reports that EPA today has dropped the contract with Definers Corp. to help the EPA shape press coverage of the agency, through a no-bid contract.

Questions:

1 – Why did EPA drop the Definers contract?

2 – Why was this a sole-source solicitation in the first place?

3 – How did EPA decide to solicit the work from Definers Corp. specifically?

4 – What did EPA need to do to justify this as a sole-source solicitation? Did the agency do what it needed to, to abide the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other pertinent laws? What exactly

was that?

5 – Does EPA believe there are inherent risks to agencies, and by extension taxpayers, in no-bid contracts? If so, what are they?

I'm looking for comment (or EPA's written thoughts, attributable to Jahan Wilcox or whoever the right person might be) by 4 p.m. today. My contact info is below.

Thank you,

Sam

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

Direct: (202) 416-3328

Cell: (702) 755-5729 *(On Fridays, please call my Cell)*

sskolnik@bgov.com

@samskolnik

To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 7/6/2017 8:01:11 PM
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...
[5.22.17 Definers EPA Monitoring Proposal.pdf](#)

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 9:38 AM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>; 'jpounder@definerscorp.com' <jpounder@definerscorp.com>
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...

George –

I am adding you to this email. Can you please contact Joe Pounder and circle back with me. I believe Definers is able to do morning summaries or morning media matrixs that we can circulate within the agency to interested people and they are also capable of doing live-time alerts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Thank you,

Jahan

From: Joe Pounder [<mailto:jpounder@definerscorp.com>]
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2017 5:26 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Updated Proposal...

Mr. Wilcox,

Please find attached an updated proposal with examples of actual alerts and daily matrix. Please let us know if you have any other questions. Our plan is when it is rolled out to clients, these alerts will be compiled into our Definers Console where they will be also stored and searchable in addition to emailed directly to inboxes. Thanks again.

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definerscorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 10/12/2017 5:06:58 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by Chevron: PUERTO RICO still in the dark as TRUMP tweets about leaving the island -- U.S. dropping out of UNESCO in 2018 -- American hostage and her family FREED in Pakistan

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by Chevron

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)), ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

Good Thursday afternoon. Good news for those of you going to Nats game tonight: Energy provider Exelon -- which owns Pepco -- is ponying up the extra money to keep the Metro open late tonight so fans can get home from the game. ***The WAMU story*** <http://bit.ly/2gzUR0O>

THE REALITY IN PUERTO RICO -- "Three weeks since Hurricane Maria, much of Puerto Rico still dark, thirsty and frustrated," by WaPo's Manuel Roig-Franzia and Arelis Hernandez in Yabucoa, Puerto Rico: "When night comes, the vast majority of this 100-mile long, 35-mile wide island plunges into profound darkness, exposing the impotence of a long-troubled power grid that was tattered by Maria's winds and rains. Eighty-four percent of the island is still without power, according to the governor's office, and local officials in many areas are steeling themselves -- with a sense of anger and dread -- for six months or more without electricity. ...

"Roughly half of Puerto Ricans have no working cellphone service, creating islands of isolation within the island and cutting off hundreds of thousands of people in regions outside the largest metropolitan areas from regular contact with their families, aid groups, medical care and the central government. Christine Enid Nieves Rodriguez, who has set up a community kitchen near the southeastern city of Humacao, has dubbed the new reality Puerto Rico's 'dystopian future.'" <http://wapo.st/2z2lCkj>

TRUMP'S TAKE ON THE ISLAND -- @realDonaldTrump at 6:49 a.m.: "'Puerto Rico survived the Hurricanes, now a financial crisis looms largely of their own making.' says Sharyl Attkisson. A total lack of....." ... **at 6:58 a.m.:** "...accountability say the Governor. Electric and all infrastructure was disaster before hurricanes. Congress to decide how much to spend...." **at 7:07 a.m.:** "...We cannot keep FEMA, the Military & the First Responders, who have been amazing (under the most difficult circumstances) in P.R. forever!"

-- PUERTO RICO'S REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR -- @ricardorossello: "The U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico are requesting the support that any of our fellow citizens would

receive across our Nation."

PAUL RYAN'S BIG MONEY -- Dotty's founder Craig Estey gave the speaker \$200,000. Phil Knight, the founder of Nike, gave him \$100,000.

***** **A message from Chevron:** We're piloting a program that uses drones to keep an eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines-all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2y61G3U> *****

WHAT TRUMP SIGNED THIS MORNING -- Adam Cancryn: "President Donald Trump on Thursday signed an executive order directing an overhaul of major federal health regulations, calling it the first step toward fulfilling the GOP's promise to repeal Obamacare. The order is aimed at encouraging the rise of a raft of cheap, loosely regulated health insurance plans that don't have to comply with certain Obamacare consumer protections and benefit rules. They'd attract younger and healthier people -- leaving older and sicker ones in the Obamacare markets facing higher and higher costs.

"**'We've been hearing about the disaster** of Obamacare for so long,' Trump said. 'I just keep hearing repeal, replace, repeal, replace. Well we're starting that process.'" <http://politi.co/2ziEi16>

-- **Members of the International Franchise Association** were in the Roosevelt Room for the president signing an executive order on health care: Shelly Sun, Reem Aloul, Catherine Monson, Howard James, Gordon Logan, Al Rodriguez, Mitch Cohen, Tom Baber, David Barr and Robert Cresanti. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2z1Wn2C>

PAGING JARED AND IVANKA -- "Trump's Gay Backers No Longer See Him as the Great Straight Hope," by The Daily Beast's Asawin Suebsaeng and Sam Stein: "[Conservative gay rights activist Chris] Barron and others are alarmed at the direction the administration is taking. Trump is responsible for some of it, having signed a directive banning the recruitment of transgender troops. But much of it has originated from his agencies. The Justice Department has changed its position on whether sexual orientation is covered under the Civil Rights Act, withdrawn federal protections for transgender kids in schools, and said it will not prosecute organizations who cite religious objections when declining to serve gay customers." <http://thebea.st/2ziPvPo>

GOOD NEWS -- "American woman, Canadian husband and children freed in Pakistan after 5-year hostage ordeal," by WaPo's Shaiq Hussain and Brian Murphy: "A Taliban-linked faction has freed an American woman and her Canadian husband who were abducted more than five years ago and had three children in captivity, U.S. and Pakistani officials said Thursday. The Pakistani military said in a statement that the couple and their three children were found 'through an intelligence-based operation' in coordination with U.S. agencies tracking the hostages along the border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"The statement, however, gave no further details of the rescue effort staged

Wednesday or possible casualties. The White House praised it as a 'positive' sign of closer cooperation with Pakistan on counterterrorism efforts." <http://wapo.st/2z2bxon>

HAPPENING TONIGHT -- POLITICO will host the annual POLITICO 50 celebration, honoring our list of the thinkers, doers and dreamers reshaping American politics in 2017 -- and beyond. **AND YES**, we'll have the Nats game on. **RSVP** <http://bit.ly/2xdK7Q7>

TURTLE BAY WATCH -- "U.S. Will Withdraw From Unesco, Citing Its 'Anti-Israel Bias'," by NYT's Eileen Sullivan: "The Trump administration announced on Thursday that it would withdraw from Unesco, the United Nations cultural organization, after years of America distancing itself because of what it called the group's 'anti-Israel bias.' ... While the United States withdrew from the group, the Trump administration said it wanted to continue to be engaged with Unesco to provide American perspective and expertise, but as a nonmember observer. The United States withdrawal goes into effect at the end of 2018. ...

"The Obama administration cut off funding to Unesco in 2011 because the group admitted Palestinians as full members, which the United States saw as undercutting its influence in countries around the world. America lost its vote in the organization in 2013 because it ended its financial contributions." <http://nyti.ms/2zhBnpt>

AFTERNOON READ -- "How the VA fueled the national opioid crisis and is killing thousands of veterans," by Art Levine in Newsweek: "In 2011, veterans were twice as likely to die from accidental opioid overdoses as non-veterans. One reason, as an exhaustive Newsweek investigation-based on this reporter's book, Mental Health, Inc.-found, is that for over a decade, the VA recklessly overprescribed opiates and psychiatric medications. Since mid-2012, though, it has swung dangerously in the other direction, ordering a drastic cutback of opioids for chronic pain patients, but it is bungling that program and again putting veterans at risk." <http://bit.ly/2z2bJE1>

ATTENTION TRAVELERS -- "Hotel at iconic TWA terminal will evoke glamour of jet age," by AP's Karen Matthews: "The hotel ... will include two new buildings with 505 rooms, a rooftop pool, an observation deck where guests can watch planes take off and a museum stocked with artifacts, including uniforms lent by former TWA flight attendants. But the starring feature will be the long-closed TWA Flight Center, designed by architect Eero Saarinen. The center will be preserved, along with its Charles Eames furniture and Noguchi fountain, as the hotel's lobby." <http://bit.ly/2yily26>

TRANSITIONS -- Nathan Brand is joining Todd Rokita's Senate campaign in Indiana as communications director. He comes from America Rising Squared and is an alum of the Kelly Ayotte and Marco Rubio campaigns. ... **Kendra Arnold** has been named executive director of the Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust, a conservative ethics watchdog group. She was previously the group's general counsel.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS - ROMNEY ALUMNI -- Bruce Nilson, VP of Red Curve

Solutions and alum of Mitt Romney's 2008 and 2012 presidential campaigns, and **Nancy Weindruch**, VP of communications for the Council for Responsible Nutrition, got married Wednesday afternoon by Mitt Romney at the state house in Boston. "They met at Kramer Books in DuPont in March of 2016. Governor Romney became aware of their engagement in August and his office reached out to the couple last week. ... A wedding celebration weekend for friends and family will take place in the new year." **Pics** <http://politi.co/2g4kkPq> ... <http://politi.co/2z2wvUm>

-- **Anna Douglas**, a former Washington correspondent for the Raleigh News and Observer who is now a reporter for the Charlotte Observer, got married to accountant **Hillary Holt** at the Quarry at Carrigan Farms in Mooresville, N.C. **Pic by Elizabeth Koh** <http://bit.ly/2g5mMVP>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Steven Luckett, a multimedia producer and former longtime producer/assignment editor at NBC4, and **Desiré Greene** of boutique federal government consulting firm V2/Vergys LLC, recently welcomed Christian Marcellus Luckett, who weighed in at 6 lbs., 5 oz. and 20". **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2xmM9IC>

SPOTTED -- Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) on an American Airlines flight from Louisville to DCA, seated in coach.

***** **A message from Chevron:** This is a story about energy, safety, and some truly high-flyin' doin'. We're piloting a program that uses drones, HD imaging, and thermal mapping to help keep a close eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines-all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2y61G3U> *****

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[View online](#)

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Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Energy
Sent: Mon 2/5/2018 3:06:33 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Energy: Not just Democrats blocking Trump nominees — CEQ nominee withdrawn — More trouble in the nuclear family

By Kelsey Tamborrino | 02/05/2018 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Darius Dixon, Eric Wolff and Alex Guillén

YOU'VE REALLY GOT A HOLD ON ME: It's not just Democrats who are obstructing President Donald Trump's nominees across key positions in federal agencies - GOP lawmakers are standing in the way, too. At least 11 Republican senators have disclosed holds on nominees for agencies including the departments of Energy, Agriculture and State, Pro's Anthony Adragna reports.

Republicans have been quick to blame Democrats for keeping the Trump administration from filling key federal positions, but the GOP holds have become common as senators turn to them for leverage to extract policy concessions from federal agencies. And it's notables since senior Republicans have raised [the possibility of changing](#) Senate rules due to the nomination backlog, and the hold-ups are causing intraparty frustration for making an already arduous confirmation process even more difficult.

Most recently, Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman [John Barrasso](#) announced he put a hold on an Energy nominee over the agency's practice of selling excess government-controlled uranium onto the market. And he's not the only one: Sen. [Ted Cruz](#) is objecting to an Agriculture Department nominee as he pushes for changes to the biofuel program, while Sen. [Dean Heller](#), an opponent of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, is blocking a nominee to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Senate Energy Chairman [Lisa Murkowski](#) called the holds "silly" and said her fellow Republicans should "knock it off." Read the story [here](#).

WELCOME TO MONDAY! Congrats to the Philadelphia Eagles! I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino, and RFA's Rachel Gantz was first to know New Orleans and Miami are tied for hosting the most Super Bowls, with 10 each. Miami, however, will hold the record once it hosts again in 2020. For today: Who was the first House member to represent two states? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to ktamborrino@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@kelseytam](#), [@Morning_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

HARTNETT WHITE OUT: Kathleen Hartnett White is out as nominee to lead the White House's Council on Environmental Quality, ME has confirmed. A controversial nominee, Hartnett White had faced considerable backlash for her previous comments on carbon dioxide, climate science and anti-pollution regulations, not to mention her crediting fossil fuels for helping to end slavery. Her nomination had been stalled for months, even as other energy picks moved forward.

"I respectfully withdraw my name from further consideration to be confirmed as Chairman

of the White House Council on Environmental Quality effective immediately. I want to thank President Trump for his confidence in me and I will continue to champion his policies and leadership on environmental and energy issues of critical importance to making our nation great, prosperous and secure again," Hartnett White said in a statement. "... In the best interest of facilitating confirmation of the President's nominees throughout his administration, as well the needs of my family and work, I feel it is best, at this point in time, to withdraw my name from further consideration."

The White House still had faith in Hartnett White last month, when it renominated her after her nomination had stagnated the previous year. Hartnett White had been a target of greens since her name was first brought up in late 2016. During an appearance before the Senate EPW Committee after being nominated, Hartnett White touted carbon dioxide as "necessary for life on Earth" and drew initial concern from several corn-state Republicans about calls to repeal the Renewable Fuel Standard, but then walked that back to align herself with the White House's stance.

IN THE CLEAR: The news also helps clear the way for two EPA nominations to move forward: Andrew Wheeler - whose past lobbying clients include coal producer Murray Energy - to be deputy administrator and Holly Greaves to be chief financial officer. Last week, Tom Carper, the ranking Democrat on EPW and fierce critic of Hartnett White, told EPA's Scott Pruitt he'd work to block the EPA nominees until Trump withdrew the Hartnett White nomination. "I made it clear that those nominations were going to find it difficult to move forward expeditiously as long as the nomination of Kathleen Hartnett White was still out there," Carper told reporters. On Saturday, Carper touted the news. "It was abundantly clear that leading the White House Council on Environmental Quality wasn't the right job for Kathleen Hartnett White," he tweeted. "I often say when you think you're right, when you know you're right, you must never give up. That's what we did here." The EPW Committee announced it will hold a business meeting on Wheeler's nomination on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.

NEI'S MESSY DIVORCE GOES TO COURT: NextEra Energy made a splash last month when it dropped its membership with the Nuclear Energy Institute. But now the company is suing the D.C. trade group over alleged economic retaliation. In a lawsuit filed Friday, NextEra says that NEI has refused to let them retain access to an industry-wide nuclear personnel database called PADS through March unless the company forks over \$860,000, most which NextEra says are fees related to NEI membership. "NextEra promptly notified NEI that it would not accede to this extortionate and coercive demand," the complaint, filed in the District Court for the Southern District of Florida, West Palm Beach, states. NextEra says that they paid about \$3 million a year in NEI membership fees. The timing is also calculated to inflict pain, according to NextEra, because its St. Lucie nuclear plant is scheduled to begin a refueling operation - a process that relies heavily on PADS for vetting work, and psychological and criminal histories of hundreds of workers brought on-site - this coming Wednesday.

NextEra says it left NEI because the group was backing "bad energy policy" that was out of step with its business and would "unnecessarily harm consumers." NEI's support of Energy Secretary Rick Perry's ill-fated grid resilience proposal was particularly problematic for NextEra, as were the group's support of nuclear at the expense of other forms of generation. "NEI will use

that membership fee, in part, to advocate for policies that are directly at odds with the NextEra Companies' interests and bad for the electricity industry as a whole," the company states. In our [previous reporting](#) on NEI's drama, we noted that board chairman Don Brandt described NextEra CEO Jim Robo as being "more hardened on his decision" to leave the D.C. trade association than Entergy chief Leo Denault after other utility CEO attempted to dissuade them.

NEI responded saying the claims of the lawsuit was without merit, and said for NextEra to call NEI's approach "retaliatory, or even suggest the notion of extortion, is both counter-factual and offensive to the good faith effort the offer represents." NEI said it reached out to the company in good faith to open a dialogue to help keep the industry "as unified as possible, on regulatory and other policy positions. Unfortunately, rather than even opening a dialogue NextEra immediately followed its rejection of NEI's offer with a baseless lawsuit."

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES: A New Jersey-based home improvement contractor who is married to a former household staffer of Donald and Melania Trump is now working as an EPA official, POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia reports. Steve Kopec joined EPA's Region 2 office in New York as a special assistant on Dec. 18, according to a memo obtained by POLITICO. "Steve comes to us from private industry, where he fashioned his career around customer service and organizational efficiencies," EPA Region 2 Administrator Pete Lopez wrote in the memo. "Steve is an experienced manager with skills in team building, management and organization." Andrew reports via public records that Kopec previously ran a contracting business from his home in Haskell, N.J., called Steve's Tools in Motion. His wife Dagmara previously worked for the Trump family in New York, according to a person familiar with her situation. Read it [here](#).

RYDER NOMINATED FOR TVA: The president will nominate Memphis attorney John Ryder to the last open seat on the board of directors for the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Times Free Press [reports](#) Ryder, who will need to be confirmed by the Senate, has "served as general counsel at the Republican National Committee for the past five years and is a long-time GOP activist." Tennessee Sen. [Lamar Alexander](#), a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said he was glad to see the news. Ryder "understands that TVA's mission is to continue to provide cheap, clean, reliable electricity for homes and businesses throughout the seven-state Tennessee Valley region," he said.

U.S. CONSIDERING VENEZUELAN OIL RESTRICTIONS: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Sunday the U.S. is considering restricting Venezuelan crude oil imports and exports of U.S. refined products to Venezuela, in order to apply pressure on President Nicolas Maduro to "return to the constitution," Reuters reports. "One of the aspects of considering sanctioning oil is what effect would it have on the Venezuelan people? Is it a step that might bring this to an end more rapidly?" Tillerson said at a news conference, referring to Venezuela's economic and political crisis. More [here](#).

A FRIENDLY WAGER: With the Eagles' Super Bowl win in the books, FERC Commissioner Cheryl LaFleur owes Robert Powelson some lobsters. Powelson [tweeted](#) on Friday that the pair should up their Super Bowl wager, which originally had the loser wear the winning team's jersey to their February open meeting. LaFleur [tweeted](#) she'd bet two Maine lobsters, to which Powelson [said](#) he'd offer up "(2) Kobe beef cheesesteaks and add a case of Victory IPA to wash

them down." LaFleur agreed to those new terms, adding she would add beverages as well, likely Sam Adams. After the game, Powelson tweeted an invite to Commissioner Neil Chatterjee, after he tweeted his own support for the Patriots. "Commish, please join me in Philly for the parade. Love to host you! Fly Eagles Fly!" he said.

GOT KIGALI ON MY MIND: The Trump administration last year announced rare support for an international agreement that would reduce a greenhouse gas, but it still has a heavy lift ahead. The Hudson Institute will go over the details of the status of the amendment, including discussion of getting two-thirds of the Senate to approve it (and when the administration should submit it), and possibly also how the federal government will implement the treaty if approved. The D.C. Circuit rejected EPA's use of the Clean Air Act to implement reductions of hydrofluorocarbons, leaving supporters considering the Toxic Substances Control Act as an alternative. **If you go:** Hudson Institute, 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 400, at 9 a.m.

EXXON'S CLIMATE BOTTOM LINE: Exxon Mobil released its 2-degree scenario report late Friday, finding that even under aggressive climate policies there would be "little risk" to its investments. The report has been sought by shareholders who have been asking what the effect of policies - like the Paris climate agreement - might have on the company's bottom line. "Based on currently anticipated production schedules, we estimate that by 2040, over 90 percent of our year-end 2016 proved reserves will have been produced," the Friday report said. "Considering that the 2°C Scenarios Average implies significant use of oil and natural gas through the middle of the century, we believe these reserves face little risk." Read the report here.

BREAKING DOWN THE FUEL MIX: Data from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association show "electric cooperatives' retail fuel mix nationwide is trending toward natural gas and renewable energy resources and away from coal-based generation." In a news post explaining the trend, NRECA writes that the share of co-op electricity from coal was 41 percent in 2016. That's compared with 54 percent in 2014, according to NRECA's research. According to the recently released research from Lauren Khair, NRECA regional economic analyst, and Michael Leitman, NRECA strategic analyst, "as coal use decreased, natural gas rose from 18 percent in 2014 to 26 percent in 2016" and the "share of renewable energy resources (non-hydro) doubled from 4 percent to 8 percent for the same period." Read more.

CALIFORNIA SCHEMIN': California is readying itself to fight back if the Trump administration tries to stop it from its tough focus on emissions, Bloomberg's Mark Chediak, Dana Hull and John Lippert report. During a Bloomberg New Energy Finance event Friday, Mary Nichols, chairman of the California Air Resources Board, said she thought "there would be a war with many states lining up with California" if the state's rule-setting waiver is revoked. More here.

- The Energy Information Administration broke down California's plans on Friday to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030. More here.

HEADS UP: The House will consider a few bills today under suspension of the rules, including: H.R. 2371 (115), the Western Area Power Administration Transparency Act; H.R. 2888 (115), the Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park Establishment Act; S. 1438 (115), the Gateway Arch

National Park Designation Act and [H.R. 219 \(115\)](#), the Swan Lake Hydroelectric Project Boundary Correction Act.

BILL SPOTLIGHT: Sens. [John Boozman](#), [Jim Inhofe](#), [Cory Booker](#) and [Dianne Feinstein](#) introduced bipartisan legislation Friday to modernize investment in water infrastructure and amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014. The "Securing Required Funding for Water Infrastructure Now (SRF WIN) Act," [S. 2364 \(115\)](#), in part would authorize \$200 million annually over five years to support state revolving fund projects exclusively, and would allow thousands of vetted drinking water and wastewater projects to receive funding, effectively eliminating the need for EPA to process the loan applications.

TELECOM GOES GREEN: Following news from T-Mobile that it set a goal to achieve 100 percent renewable energy for powering its networks by 2021, AT&T has hinted it will do the same. The company [tweeted](#) last week that it "just signed a couple of the industry's largest renewable energy deals," with more details to come. Todd Larsen, executive co-director of consumer and corporate engagement at Green America, which has called on AT&T to move to 100 percent renewables, said they welcome the news. "We are pleased that AT&T is listening to the thousands of consumers who have encouraged the company to pursue clean energy and to join the other 123 [RE100](#) companies who have made the '100 percent renewable' pledge," Larson said.

MAIL CALL: Maine Sens. [Susan Collins](#) and [Angus King](#) urged leaders on the Finance committee to include language from the Biomass Thermal Utilization Act - which would qualify biomass heating equipment for renewable energy tax credits - in any tax extender legislation. Read the letter [here](#).

QUICK HITS

- Perry certain SRS has 'very bright' future ahead of it, [Aiken Standard](#).
- High-ranking Trump official attends hunting convention, [The Hill](#).
- Trump official discusses offshore drilling with governor, legislators in separate meetings, [The News & Observer](#).
- OSHA standards moot in Quinton rig explosion because of exemption for oil-and-gas industry, [Tulsa World](#).
- Document reveals ambitious reorganization timeline, [E&E News](#).

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/02/05/not-just-democrats-blocking-trump-nominees-092892>

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EPA Morning News Highlights 11.14.17

Center for Accountability in Science: Dr. Dourson is a Seasoned Toxicologist. Why Don't Environmental Groups Support His EPA Nomination?

Major media coverage of President Trump's nominations to the Environmental Protection Agency is enough to make any professional scientist's head spin. The New York Times last month criticized Dr. Nancy Beck, nominated as a senior EPA administrator, for having a different professional opinion from some of her peers at the EPA. NBC News recently called Dr. Michael Dourson, nominated to head the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, a "Toxic Chemical Swamp Creature." The news stories appear to be taking their cues from radical environmental groups, like EWG and NRDC, which are solidly in the "all chemicals are bad under every circumstance" camp.

E&E News: Bill Wehrum is sworn in as air chief

Four days after narrowly winning Senate confirmation, Bill Wehrum was sworn in today as U.S. EPA air chief. The private swearing-in by Administrator Scott Pruitt was announced in an internal email by EPA Chief of Staff Ryan Jackson. "Bill comes to the agency with years of institutional knowledge that will help guide him through administering air quality issues for all Americans, and his experience will be vital to the agency's mission to bring about regulatory reforms," Jackson said in the message to EPA employees. Wehrum will oversee the Office of Air and Radiation, which as of December had almost 1,100 employees, according to figures recently released by EPA in response to a Freedom of Information Act request. But while no one questions his expertise in Clean Air Act issues, Wehrum also carries baggage from his work in private practice representing companies and industry trade groups that regularly challenge EPA regulations

Hendersonville News: EPA Assists North Carolina in Preventing Water Pollution

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently awarded \$3,766,800 to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to support management of nonpoint sources of

water pollution. The funding will be used for a variety of projects designed to improve water quality in priority watersheds across the state. “Improving the Nation’s water is one of EPA’s highest priorities under the Trump Administration,” said Scott Pruitt, Administrator. “This grant funds state-led programs that are working for communities throughout North Carolina.” Nonpoint-source pollution (NPS) is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over the ground.

Bega District News: EPA continues ‘complex’ investigation into illegal logging claims

The NSW Environment Protection Authority is continuing its investigation into alleged illegal state forest logging in Tantawangalo. EPA officers inspected logged areas of Tantawangalo State Forest, assessing rocky outcrops and cliff landscape features as part of the ongoing investigation, following complaints by South East Forest Rescue in 2016. “The investigation is complex, covering a large area and is currently ongoing,” an EPA spokesperson said. The agency raised concerns with Forestry Corporation NSW following a compliance operation in March this year. “We advised the Forestry Corporation of NSW of concerns with identifying rocky outcrops and their boundaries and encouraged them to improve their practices,” the EPA said at the time.

Taiwan News: China blocks Taiwan EPA head from attending UNFCCC COP 23

The United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Bonn, Germany will last from the 6th until the 17th of November. China has continued to block Taiwan in the international arena and barred Taiwan's head of the environmental department from joining either a main or side event this year. Despite the pressure from China, Lee Ying-yuan (李應元), the Minister of Environmental Protection Administration and the head of Taiwanese delegation, has successfully managed to meet Germany's environment officials, President of Taiwan's Pacific ally Hilda Heine, Tuvalu Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga, and environmental department heads of other countries outside the event. The 23rd Conference of Parties (COP 23) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, is taking place in Bonn, Germany, presided over by the Government of Fiji.

National Morning News Highlights 11.14.17

The Wall Street Journal: Three UCLA Basketball Players Set to Leave China

Three UCLA basketball players detained for a week in China were set to fly back home late Tuesday, hours after U.S. President Donald Trump said he had requested assistance on their behalf from his counterpart Xi Jinping. UCLA freshmen LiAngelo Ball, Jalen Hill and Cody Riley were seen late Tuesday at Shanghai’s Pudong International Airport checking into a Delta flight bound for Los Angeles, airline staff said. Their departure came after a week of tension, with the players detained by police in the eastern city Hangzhou as suspects in an investigation

of suspected shoplifting from a Louis Vuitton boutique. Ending his trip to Asia on Tuesday, Mr. Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that in recent days he asked the Chinese president for help. Mr. Trump called the incident “unfortunate” but said he had had “a great conversation” about the players with China’s leader. “President Xi has been terrific on that subject,” he said.

The Washington Post: Sessions considering second special counsel to investigate Republican concerns, letter shows

Attorney General Jeff Sessions is entertaining the idea of appointing a second special counsel to investigate a host of Republican concerns — including alleged wrongdoing by the Clinton Foundation and the controversial sale of a uranium company to Russia — and has directed senior federal prosecutors to explore at least some of the matters and report back to him and his top deputy, according to a letter obtained by The Washington Post. The revelation came in a response by the Justice Department to an inquiry from House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), who in July and again in September called for Sessions to appoint a second special counsel to investigate concerns he had related to the 2016 election and its aftermath.

The Hill: Trump faces big choice on Moore’s fate

President Trump is set to play a decisive role in the Republican battle over Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore — if he chooses to do so. Trump, who so far has declined to directly address the allegations against Moore, is facing pressure from both sides. Senate Republicans signaled on Monday that they want nothing to do with Moore and will work to prevent his seating, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) saying he believed Moore’s accusers. Key parts of Trump’s political base, however, are sticking with the former chief justice of Alabama’s state Supreme Court. Breitbart News and Trump’s former White House strategist and political guru Stephen Bannon are both fighting for Moore, who remains the favorite in Alabama — a state Trump won in last year’s election by 28 points.

TRUMP TWEETS

Center for Accountability in Science

<https://www.accountablesience.com/michael-dourson-is-a-seasoned-toxicologist-why-arent-environmental-groups-supporting-his-epa-nomination/>

Dr. Dourson is a Seasoned Toxicologist. Why Don’t Environmental Groups Support His

EPA Nomination?

By CAS Staff, 11/13/17

Major media coverage of President Trump's nominations to the Environmental Protection Agency is enough to make any professional scientist's head spin.

The New York Times last month criticized Dr. Nancy Beck, nominated as a senior EPA administrator, for having a different professional opinion from some of her peers at the EPA. NBC News recently called Dr. Michael Dourson, nominated to head the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, a "Toxic Chemical Swamp Creature."

The news stories appear to be taking their cues from radical environmental groups, like EWG and NRDC, which are solidly in the "all chemicals are bad under every circumstance" camp. But that viewpoint certainly isn't backed by scientists. Researchers with George Mason University found that close to 80 percent of Society of Toxicology members believe the Environmental Working Group, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Center for Science in the Public Interest overstate the risks of chemicals.

As our chief science officer Dr. Joseph Perrone wrote in a recent op-ed, the David and Goliath story of environmental heroes versus the Big Bad Industry reduces complex issues of toxicity into headline-generating news of little substance.

Let's look at Dr. Dourson as an example.

As a toxicologist with 40 years' experience working for the Environmental Protection Agency, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, and the nonprofit Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment (TERA), Dr. Dourson is far more qualified to head his office than some of the President's nominees to other executive departments.

During his time at the EPA, Dr. Dourson was one of the founders of the agency's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS), a program that identifies and characterizes the health hazards of

chemicals in the environment. When Dr. Dourson moved on from the agency in the mid-90's, he developed an improved version of the database, called the International Toxicity Estimates for Risk (ITER). ITER compiles data on the human health risks of chemicals, and compares the risk assessments of international groups like the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Canada, and the Netherlands' RIVM.

It's such a good database, in fact, that The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Toxicology Data Network (TOXNET) includes ITER in its list of reference databases for public use. It provides free, easily accessible information for students, researchers, government agencies and even the rogue environmental groups who want to see its founder sidelined from the work of toxicology.

As far as Dr. Dourson's reputation among professional scientists goes, look no further than the EPA's own announcement of his nomination, which included more than a half dozen endorsements from professors, public servants, and the Editor-in-Chief of an international toxicology journal.

So the reports which claim that private sector scientists are unable to contribute to the body of scientific knowledge in a positive way? They're weak arguments at best, and intentionally misleading at worst.

For us, the day Dr. Dourson is no longer certified by the American Board of Toxicology, or shirks his fellowships to both the Academy of Toxicological Sciences and the Society for Risk Analysis is the day we believe public health is no longer his primary interest.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/11/13/stories/1060066391>

Bill Wehrum is sworn in as air chief

By Sean Reilly, 11/13/17

Four days after narrowly winning Senate confirmation, Bill Wehrum was sworn in today as U.S. EPA air chief.

The private swearing-in by Administrator Scott Pruitt was announced in an internal email by EPA Chief of Staff Ryan Jackson.

"Bill comes to the agency with years of institutional knowledge that will help guide him through administering air quality issues for all Americans, and his experience will be vital to the agency's mission to bring about regulatory reforms," Jackson said in the message to EPA employees.

Wehrum will oversee the Office of Air and Radiation, which as of December had almost 1,100 employees, according to figures recently released by EPA in response to a Freedom of Information Act request.

But while no one questions his expertise in Clean Air Act issues, Wehrum also carries baggage from his work in private practice representing companies and industry trade groups that regularly challenge EPA regulations.

As recently as this morning, his profile page was still posted on the website of his former firm, Hunton & Williams LLP, although it has since been taken down. Wehrum had previously told EPA he would avoid participating in matters involving former clients for a year after last providing a service.

Also trained as an environmental engineer, Wehrum previously worked in the Office of Air and Radiation as counsel from 2001 to 2005 during the George W. Bush administration. He then served as acting chief for two years, but Senate Democrats at the time blocked his bid to get the job permanently.

In this round, President Trump nominated Wehrum to head the air office in early September. He won Senate confirmation Thursday by a 49-47 vote that fell almost exactly along party lines. With Pruitt, he is now one of two Senate-confirmed appointees at EPA.

In the interim, Sarah Dunham, a career employee, had been serving as acting head of the air office.

Hendersonville News

<http://www.hendersonville.com/news/2017/11/epa-assists-north-carolina-preventing-water-pollution/>

EPA Assists North Carolina in Preventing Water Pollution

By Staff, 11/13/17

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently awarded \$3,766,800 to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to support management of nonpoint sources of water pollution.

The funding will be used for a variety of projects designed to improve water quality in priority watersheds across the state.

“Improving the Nation’s water is one of EPA’s highest priorities under the Trump Administration,” said Scott Pruitt, Administrator. “This grant funds state-led programs that are working for communities throughout North Carolina.”

Nonpoint-source pollution (NPS) is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over the ground. This runoff picks up natural and man-made pollutants as it flows, eventually depositing the material into lakes, rivers, and groundwater. This type of pollution can be difficult to manage since it cannot be traced to a specific source. Controlling nonpoint source pollution is especially important since one in three Americans get their drinking water from public systems that rely on seasonal and rain-dependent streams.

North Carolina has identified more than 40 watersheds across the state as priorities for restoration using 319 grant funds. EPA’s grant will help North Carolina fund NPS management projects and programs including:

- Local watershed planning and restoration;
 - Water quality monitoring;
 - Ground water protection;
 - Forestry management;

- Agricultural management;
- Erosion and sediment control;
 - Septic tank management;
 - Nutrient reductions; and
- Permitting and Enforcement.

Nonpoint sources of pollution continue to be recognized as the nation's largest remaining cause of surface water quality impairments. It can contribute to problems like harmful algal blooms, erosion, and bacteria contamination of surface and groundwater.

Nonpoint sources of pollution include agricultural runoff, urban runoff, abandoned mine drainage, failing on-site disposal systems, and pollution caused by changes to natural stream channels. Congress enacted Section 319 of the Clean Water Act in 1987 to control nonpoint sources of water pollution. Through Section 319, EPA provides states with grant funding to implement their nonpoint source programs and to support local watershed projects to improve water quality.

Taiwan News

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3296537>

By Eric Kao, 11/13/17

The United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Bonn, Germany will last from the 6th until the 17th of November. China has continued to block Taiwan in the international arena and barred Taiwan's head of the environmental department from joining either a main or side event this year.

Despite the pressure from China, Lee Ying-yuan (李應元), the Minister of Environmental Protection Administration and the head of Taiwanese delegation, has successfully managed to meet Germany's environment officials, President of Taiwan's Pacific ally Hilda Heine, Tuvalu Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga, and environmental department heads of other countries outside the event.

The 23rd Conference of Parties (COP 23) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, is taking place in Bonn, Germany, presided over by the Government of Fiji. The main focus of the conference will be the implementation and enforcement of the Paris Climate Agreement, which was first adopted by consensus in December 2015.

The subject of climate change is of crucial importance to the survival of all mankind, even though Taiwan is still not a member of the United Nations, its delegation group is still relatively large. It consists of government officials and specialists from different government agencies, including the Central Weather Bureau, Council of Agriculture, Water Resource Agency, as well as representatives from the cities of New Taipei, Kaohsiung, and Tainan. They have scheduled to participate in multilateral or bilateral talks with the other attending countries.

The Central News Agency reported that Lee was forcibly denied entrance to the conference hall, due to the impeding of members of the Chinese delegation.

“Allowing Taiwan to participate in such important matters is the responsibility of the entire international society,” says Lee, obviously disappointed by the UN's inaction in the incident. Lee points out that Taiwan has an enormous population of 23 million people, its unquestionable existence is a clear justification of its ability and right to discuss such issues with other countries in the world.

“We do not want to call out names, but such a big country really doesn't have to act in such an ungenerous manner,” Lee adds.

Despite not being able to enter the conference hall, Lee still sought ways to improve diplomatic ties with the other attending countries by inviting world leaders and representatives to a luncheon held along the Rhine. President Hilda Heine of the Marshall Islands, Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga of Tuvalu and environment ministers from countries such as Honduras were among those who attended the luncheon.

Bega District News

<http://www.begadistrictnews.com.au/story/5056373/epa-continues-complex-investigation-into-illegal-logging-claims/> **EPA continues ‘complex’ investigation into illegal logging claims**

By Alasdair McDonald, 11/14/17

The NSW Environment Protection Authority is continuing its investigation into alleged illegal state forest logging in Tantawangalo.

EPA officers inspected logged areas of Tantawangalo State Forest, assessing rocky outcrops and cliff landscape features as part of the ongoing investigation, following complaints by South East Forest Rescue in 2016.

“The investigation is complex, covering a large area and is currently ongoing,” an EPA spokesperson said.

The agency raised concerns with Forestry Corporation NSW following a compliance operation in March this year.

“We advised the Forestry Corporation of NSW of concerns with identifying rocky outcrops and their boundaries and encouraged them to improve their practices,” the EPA said at the time.

Forestry Corporation said they were “confident” all rocky outcrops within the compartment were being protected, yet did concede the interpretation surrounding the Threatened Species Licence for such areas is an issue.

“We are working with the EPA to make it less subjective,” production supervisor for Eden Amba Addinsall said.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/three-ucla-basketball-players-set-to-leave-china-1510663619>

Three UCLA Basketball Players Set to Leave China

By James Areddy, 11/14/17

Three UCLA basketball players detained for a week in China were set to fly back home late Tuesday, hours after U.S. President Donald Trump said he had requested assistance on their behalf from his counterpart Xi Jinping.

UCLA freshmen LiAngelo Ball, Jalen Hill and Cody Riley were seen late Tuesday at Shanghai's Pudong International Airport checking into a Delta flight bound for Los Angeles, airline staff said. Their departure came after a week of tension, with the players detained by police in the eastern city Hangzhou as suspects in an investigation of suspected shoplifting from a Louis Vuitton boutique.

Ending his trip to Asia on Tuesday, Mr. Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that in recent days he asked the Chinese president for help. Mr. Trump called the incident "unfortunate" but said he had had "a great conversation" about the players with China's leader. "President Xi has been terrific on that subject," he said.

— ADVERTISEMENT —

The shoplifting investigation took on outsized importance because the players are high-profile, especially Mr. Ball who comes from a prominent sports family with a brother in the NBA and a media-hungry father, and news of their troubles broke hours before Mr. Xi welcomed Mr. Trump on his first presidential visit to China.

In China, UCLA was the guest of Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. as part of a massive marketing campaign, which included a U.S. college basketball game on Saturday that was to be the three players' freshman debut.

After being taken to a police station on Tuesday after a reported theft of sunglasses at the Louis

Vuitton boutique in Hangzhou the previous day, the trio was returned to the team's hotel. Along with a few UCLA staff members, they spent the rest of the week nestled in a set of corner rooms on a VIP floor of the Hyatt Regency Hangzhou.

It is unclear what evidence Chinese police had about the apparent shoplifting or the result of the police investigation in Hangzhou.

In his comments, Mr. Trump issued what appeared to be a veiled admonishment to the players. "You know, you're talking about very long prison sentences. They do not play games," he said, apparently referring to Chinese judicial officials.

While it isn't unusual for a U.S. president to raise legal cases involving Americans during meetings with Chinese officials, it isn't clear whether Mr. Trump did so on other matters over the past week.

China's Foreign Ministry has declined to comment on the case in recent days but last week said it would be handled according to law.

The rest of the UCLA players had returned to the U.S. after their game on Saturday. The university, which had said it was assisting Chinese authorities with their investigation, couldn't immediately be reached for comment.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/sessions-considering-second-special-counsel-to-investigate-republican-concerns-letter-shows/2017/11/13/bc92ef3c-c8d2-11e7-b0cf-7689a9f2d84e_story.html?utm_term=.2099b38eac1a

Sessions considering second special counsel to investigate Republican concerns, letter shows

By Matt Zapotosky, 11/13/17

Attorney General Jeff Sessions is entertaining the idea of appointing a second special counsel to investigate a host of Republican concerns — including alleged wrongdoing by the Clinton Foundation and the controversial sale of a uranium company to Russia — and has directed senior federal prosecutors to explore at least some of the matters and report back to him and his top deputy, according to a letter obtained by The Washington Post.

The revelation came in a response by the Justice Department to an inquiry from House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), who in July and again in September called for Sessions to appoint a second special counsel to investigate concerns he had related to the 2016 election and its aftermath.

The list of matters he wanted probed was wide ranging but included the FBI's handling of the investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while she was secretary of state, various dealings of the Clinton Foundation and several matters connected to the purchase of the Canadian mining company Uranium One by Russia's nuclear energy agency. Goodlatte took particular aim at former FBI director James B. Comey, asking for the second special counsel to evaluate the leaks he directed about his conversations with President Trump, among other things.

In response, Assistant Attorney General Stephen E. Boyd wrote that Sessions had “directed senior federal prosecutors to evaluate certain issues raised in your letters,” and that those prosecutors would “report directly to the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General, as appropriate, and will make recommendations as to whether any matters not currently under investigation should be opened, whether any matters currently under investigation require further resources, or whether any matters merit the appointment of a Special Counsel.”

Trump has repeatedly criticized his Justice Department for not aggressively probing a variety of conservative concerns. He said recently that officials there “should be looking at the Democrats” and that it was “very discouraging” they were not “going after Hillary Clinton.” On the campaign trail, Trump's supporters frequently chanted “Lock her up!” at the mention of Clinton's name.

“Hopefully they are doing something, and at some point, maybe we are going to all have it out,” Trump said recently.

Sessions's relationship with the president has been significantly strained since he recused himself from the investigation into possible coordination between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin to influence the 2016 election. The president has publicly lambasted his attorney general and noted that had he known in advance of Sessions's recusal, he would not have appointed him to the post. It was after Sessions's recusal that Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein appointed Robert S. Mueller III to lead the investigation into the Trump campaign and the Kremlin.

While the Justice Department is part of the executive branch — and the attorney general is appointed by and answers to the president — the White House generally provides input on broad policy goals and does not weigh in on criminal probes.

In that context, the letter is likely to be seen by some, especially on the left, as Sessions inappropriately bending to political pressure, perhaps to save his job. The possible reigniting of a probe of Clinton is likely to draw especially fierce criticism, even as it is welcomed by Trump's supporters.

When Trump said during the campaign that he would “instruct my attorney general to get a special prosecutor” to look into Clinton, former attorney general Michael Mukasey — a Trump supporter and vocal Clinton critic — said Trump having her investigated and jailed “would be like a banana republic.”

“Putting political opponents in jail for offenses committed in a political setting, even if they are criminal offenses — and they very well may be — is something that we don't do here,” he said.

Trump would later back down from his threats, before breathing life into them again with his more recent comments.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/360217-trump-faces-big-choice-on-moores-fate>

Trump faces big choice on Moore's fate

By Jonathan Easley and Jordan Fabian, 11/14/17

President Trump is set to play a decisive role in the Republican battle over Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore — if he chooses to do so.

Trump, who so far has declined to directly address the allegations against Moore, is facing pressure from both sides.

Senate Republicans signaled on Monday that they want nothing to do with Moore and will work to prevent his seating, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) saying he believed Moore's accusers.

Key parts of Trump's political base, however, are sticking with the former chief justice of Alabama's state Supreme Court. Breitbart News and Trump's former White House strategist and political guru Stephen Bannon are both fighting for Moore, who remains the favorite in Alabama — a state Trump won in last year's election by 28 points.

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Trump's instincts would also appear to guide him toward Moore — despite the fact that he campaigned for the conservative's GOP opponent in the Republican primary.

"The challenge here is that Trump usually goes against what the establishment wants," said a GOP strategist with close ties to the White House and Senate leadership.

Trump sided with McConnell in the GOP primary, where Moore defeated Sen. Luther Strange. Moore won days after Trump campaigned in Alabama on behalf of Strange and against the Bannon-backed Moore.

Yet Trump's embrace of Strange was hardly strong, either.

The president openly said at the event in Huntsville, Ala., that he might have been making a mistake in traveling to campaign in Alabama for Strange.

"If Luther doesn't win they're not going to say, we picked up 25 points in a short period of time," Trump said.

And he said that if Moore won, he'd be "campaigning like hell for him."

That, at least, seems like an impossibility given the allegations that Moore, at the age of 32 in 1979, had a sexual encounter with a 14-year-old.

On Monday, the controversy surrounding Moore deepened as a new accuser came forward alongside attorney Gloria Allred — who has represented dozens of women who have brought charges of sexual harassment or assault against famed men, including Trump. Beverly Young Nelson said Moore sexually assaulted her one night after work when she was 16 years old.

Moore had offered to give her a ride home after her shift at a local diner upon noticing that her boyfriend was running late to pick her up, according to Nelson's account.

But instead of driving her home, Nelson said he parked the car at the back of the restaurant, where "there were no lights," and began groping her.

"I was alarmed and I immediately asked him what he was doing," she said at a press conference.

“Instead of answering my question, Mr. Moore reached over and began groping me,” she said, adding that Moore reached over and locked the car door while she yelled at him to stop and continued to try to fight him off.

Moore then grabbed her neck and pushed her head toward his crotch, she said.

“I was terrified. He was also trying to pull my shirt off. I thought that he was going to rape me. ... I had tears running down my face,” she said.

Nelson said Moore eventually gave up and threatened that no one would believe her story. She said she kept quiet for fear he would retaliate.

Moore’s campaign released a statement maintaining his innocence and blasting Allred.

“Gloria Allred is a sensationalist leading a witch hunt, and she is only around to create a spectacle,” Moore’s Senate campaign chairman Bill Armistead said in a statement.

“We’ve said this before and we’ll say it again: Judge Moore is an innocent man and has never had any sexual misconduct with anyone,” he added.

It’s possible Allred’s entry into the Alabama story could push Trump toward Moore.

The worst thing for the establishment, one GOP source said, was that Allred convened Monday’s press conference.

“Trump hates Gloria Allred after what she did to him during the election. So I don’t know. You could see him siding with Bannon against the establishment crowd, but maybe his tripwire in

going against what Bannon is pushing for is the fact that kids are involved. I don't know. It's not good."

Some Trump supporters say it makes sense for the White House to keep its powder dry on Moore's candidacy, while at the same time distancing itself from the Senate candidate.

"This is a no-win situation and the worst thing the White House could do is take ownership of the situation," said Barry Bennett, a former Trump adviser. "You just have to express publicly the seriousness of the charges and allow Alabama voters to make their choice."

Notably, the Republican National Committee, which is closely aligned with Trump, had not cut ties with Moore as of Monday evening.

If additional accusers come forward, it could close off any viable path to victory for Moore and force him from the race while saving Trump from wading into a nasty intraparty fight.

Trump's own past battles over reports of misconduct also could play into his thinking.

The president survived the "Access Hollywood" scandal involving his past lewd remarks about women just a month before Election Day 2016. Multiple women then came forward accusing Trump of sexual assault, allegations that the president has denied. If Trump came down hard on Moore, it could open the president up to charges of hypocrisy.

Bannon and his allies are aggressively seeking to tamp down the controversy around Moore by discrediting his accusers and suggesting that Democrats or establishment Republicans are behind the attacks.

"I think there's going to be some pretty interesting stories about how that information got dropped and who paid for it and who weaponized it," Bannon said in a speech to The Citadel Republican Society over the weekend.

Moore is already fundraising off that notion.

“According to sources, establishment Republicans are colluding with the Obama-Clinton Machine behind-the-scenes in a desperate effort to sabotage my campaign and keep me out of Washington,” Moore wrote in a campaign mailer that was sent out with the subject line: “McConnell’s dirty plot to destroy me.”

The White House was quiet about the story on Monday, but remarks the day before on NBC’s “Meet the Press” from legislative director Marc Short reflected the tightrope it has sought to walk so far.

Short said that “no Senate seat is more important than the notion of child pedophilia.”

But he also praised Moore as “somebody who graduated from West Point, he served our country in Vietnam, he’s been elected multiple times statewide in Alabama.”

“The people in Alabama know Roy Moore better than we do here in D.C., and I think we have to be very cautious ... of allegations that are 40 years old that arise a month before Election Day,” Short said.

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Timothy Cama
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:37:41 PM
Subject: Definers

Hi-

Could you confirm the Washington Post report that EPA is ending the Definers contract?

Thanks.

--

Timothy Cama, Staff writer
The Hill
(202) 695-6245
Secure: timothy.cama@protonmail.com

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Jonathan Murphy
Sent: Wed 12/20/2017 4:37:01 PM
Subject: Re: Communications Help

Sounds good. When time allows, share a couple times that work. Until then, Merry Christmas.

On Wed, Dec 20, 2017 at 11:31 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Let's talk after Christmas. From our previous experience, this process takes about 6-9 months.

From: Jonathan Murphy [mailto:jmurphy@washingtonmedia.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 20, 2017 11:00 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Communications Help

Hi Jahan,

I hope this note finds you well. We worked together briefly in the Senate when I was with Senator John Warner and you were with Leader McConnell and we have also met when out with mutual friend Zach Gillan.

I wanted to reach out and see if the EPA plans to put out an RFP or use an outside firm in any capacity for communications/monitoring/media relations/digital going forward. Any work we would do with your team would be lead by Bush/RNC/Senate GOP alums, and we welcome the opportunity to work with Administrator Pruitt on his initiatives and programs. Our work is scalable and I am happy to put something together should it be of interest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Jonathan

--

Jonathan Murphy

Director of Media Relations

Washington Media Group

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--

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<http://www.washingtonmedia.com/>

To: Pace, Julie[JPace@ap.org]; Biesecker, Michael[MBiesecker@ap.org]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 6:15:32 PM
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Julie and Michael – below are the answers in bold.

From: Biesecker, Michael [mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:05 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Jahan,

Could you please clarify how electronic surveillance would potentially imperil Administrator Pruitt's physical security?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA’s Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Also, we have not seen and, depending on the amount, don't have access to what was spent on a bug sweep under Lisa Jackson, but I'm interested in reporting that out. Can you provide the documentation on that, including the date, amount and the name of the vendor?

“Please ask your source, who apparently has access to the database of EPA’s expenditures.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>; Biesecker, Michael <MBiesecker@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Julie and Michael -

Below are our on-the-record responses in bold that you can attribute to me.

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 11:47 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Bug sweeping, biometric locks

Liz, Jahan,

AP will be publishing a story about \$3,000 in taxpayer funds expended in April for a contractor to sweep Administrator Pruitt's office for electronic listening devices. We will also be reporting on spending to install biometric locks in his suite.

When coupled with the previously reported purchase of the privacy booth, it raises questions about why Pruitt feels the need to invest in courier-surveillance measures that none of his predecessors felt were necessary. EPA headquarters is a secure building with armed security and metal detectors at the entrances. Pruitt also has his personal security detail. Is the administrator concerned about the potential for electronic spying against him by the agency's own employees?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA’s Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan

Wilcox

As part of the same story, we will also be mentioning the \$120,000 Definers contract and the FOIAs filed by America Rising targeted at EPA employees viewed as potentially disloyal to the Trump administration. Please provide any comment you have on those issues.

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael



ASSOCIATED PRESS

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“There are only two forces that can carry light to all corners of the globe – the sun in the heavens and The Associated Press down here.” -- – Mark Twain, 1906

“I go with Custer and will be at the death.” – AP reporter Mark Kellogg’s final dispatch from the Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1876

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Fri 1/5/2018 11:20:00 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Better Medicare Alliance: BIG MIKE SCHMIDT scoop: Trump asked W.H. counsel to instruct Sessions to stay on Russia probe -- REINCE and DINA at Off the Record -- BANNON on the outs -- BRETT MCGURK and GINA CHON's new daughter

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Better Medicare Alliance

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Happy Friday. BIG MIKE SCHMIDT SCOOP -- NYT, A1: "Obstruction Inquiry Shows Trump's Struggle to Keep Grip on Russia Investigation": "President Trump gave firm instructions in March to the White House's top lawyer: stop the attorney general, Jeff Sessions, from recusing himself in the Justice Department's investigation into whether Mr. Trump's associates had helped a Russian campaign to disrupt the 2016 election.

"Public pressure was building for Mr. Sessions, who had been a senior member of the Trump campaign, to step aside. But the White House counsel, Donald F. McGahn II, carried out the president's orders and lobbied Mr. Sessions to remain in charge of the inquiry, according to two people with knowledge of the episode.

"Mr. McGahn was unsuccessful, and the president erupted in anger in front of numerous White House officials, saying he needed his attorney general to protect him. Mr. Trump said he had expected his top law enforcement official to safeguard him the way he believed Robert F. Kennedy, as attorney general, had done for his brother John F. Kennedy and Eric H. Holder Jr. had for Barack Obama.

"Mr. Trump then asked, 'Where's my Roy Cohn?' He was referring to his former personal lawyer and fixer, who had been Senator Joseph R. McCarthy's top aide during the investigations into communist activity in the 1950s and died in 1986."

-- OTHER BOMBSHELLS IN THE PIECE: "The special counsel has received handwritten notes from Mr. Trump's former chief of staff, Reince Priebus, showing that Mr. Trump talked to Mr. Priebus about how he had called Mr. Comey to urge him to say publicly that he was not under investigation. The president's determination to fire Mr.

Comey even led one White House lawyer to take the extraordinary step of misleading Mr. Trump about whether he had the authority to remove him." ...

... **"The New York Times has also learned that four days before** Mr. Comey was fired, one of Mr. Sessions's aides asked a congressional staff member whether he had damaging information about Mr. Comey, part of an apparent effort to undermine the F.B.I. director. It was not clear whether Mr. Mueller's investigators knew about this episode." <http://nyti.ms/2Ea1rUW>

-- THE TAKEAWAY GRAF FROM MIKE'S PIECE: "Legal experts said that of the two primary issues Mr. Mueller appears to be investigating - whether Mr. Trump obstructed justice while in office and whether there was collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia - there is currently a larger body of public evidence tying the president to a possible crime of obstruction."

-- A BIT OF FUN: MIKE'S FIRST TRUMP STORY. NYT, Aug. 31, 2006: **"Game, Set, Match Above the Roar of the City"**: "During the United States Open, many tennis fans will pass through Grand Central Terminal and hop the No. 7 train to Flushing, Queens. Little do they know that directly above their heads, some of the Open's top-seeded players are honing their skills on two almost secret courts above the terminal's main concourse.

"The courts, called the Tennis Club, are leased and operated by Donald Trump. They are directly above Vanderbilt Hall - the cavernous entrance at the south end of the building on the 42nd Street side - and are open to anyone who can, first, find them, and then is willing to pay \$155 for an hour of court time on weekdays, or \$130 on weekends. ... 'It is one of the greatest secrets of my time and the only people who know are the ones who play on it,' Trump said. 'The ceilings are high and you can play without people walking all over you. You are right in the middle of Manhattan, right in the most expensive real estate in the world.'" <http://nyti.ms/2CwLlig>

SPOTTED: Reince Priebus and Dina Powell last night at Off the Record at the Hay-Adams hotel. ... **SPOTTED** at a party hosted by Jared and Ivanka last night in a private room at the Trump Hotel: Gary Cohn, Rob Porter, H.R. McMaster, Sarah Sanders, Dina Powell, Tony Sayegh, Jason Greenblatt, Shahira Knight, Reed Cordish, Chris Liddell and Raj Shah.

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS OUT -- SLOPPY STEVE! -- at 7:52 p.m.: "I authorized Zero access to White House (actually turned him down many times) for author of phony book! I never spoke to him for book. Full of lies, misrepresentations and sources that don't exist. Look at this guy's past and watch what happens to him and Sloppy Steve!" ... **at 8:04 p.m.:** "The Fake News Media barely mentions the fact that the Stock Market just hit another New Record and that business in the U.S. is booming...but the people know! Can you imagine if "O" was president and had these numbers - would be biggest story on earth! Dow now over 25,000."

******* A message from Better Medicare Alliance: HEALTH CARE POLICY ALERT:**

We can all agree that high need, high cost patients deserve the best care. And with Medicare Advantage, seniors and people with disabilities are getting the high-value care they need through flexible benefits and specialized care. Learn more:

<http://bettermedicarealliance.org> *****

THE BANNON-IS-FADING PIECES ...

-- ALEX ISENSTADT: "Bannon on the brink": "Former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon has lost the support of his primary financial backer Rebekah Mercer, further isolating him and potentially crippling his ambitious plans to reshape the 2018 political landscape. Mercer, the daughter of billionaire Robert Mercer and a key funder of President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, issued a rare public statement on Thursday rebuking Bannon for his scalding attack on Trump and his family in a forthcoming book, 'Fire and Fury,' by author Michael Wolff.

"I support President Trump and the platform upon which he was elected,' Mercer said in the statement, which was first reported by the Washington Post. 'My family and I have not communicated with Steve Bannon in many months and have provided no financial support to his political agenda, nor do we support his recent actions and statements.' The scolding from the reclusive Mercer capped a second day of fallout surrounding the book. The president has blasted Bannon for his remarks and his cooperation with Wolff, saying that Bannon had 'lost his mind.'" <http://politi.co/2Au4w03>

-- WAPO'S MICHAEL SCHERER, BOB COSTA and ROS HELDERMAN: "Yesterday morning, he was key. Today, I'm not sure': Bannon's allies start to abandon him": "Former White House chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon's hopes of leading a revolt in the Republican Party this year suffered a severe blow Thursday as his allies rebuked and abandoned him following a nasty public break with President Trump. Candidates who once embraced Bannon distanced themselves from his efforts, groups aligned with his views sought separation, and his most important financial backer, the billionaire Mercer family, which has championed him for years, announced that it was severing ties.

"Even his position as chairman of Breitbart News, a website he has referred to as one of his most effective 'weapons,' was being reviewed by the company's leadership, according to people familiar with the talks - a move that White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders publicly encouraged at Thursday's White House news briefing. But it was the rare statement from Rebekah Mercer, daughter of investor Robert Mercer, that hit hardest and, combined with Trump's fury, has left Bannon isolated from the two power centers that elevated him from a fringe commentator to an office in the White House." <http://wapo.st/2ClcqsR>

-- NYT'S KEN VOGEL, JONATHAN MARTIN and JEREMY PETERS: "Led by the Mercers, Bannon's Allies Abandon Him": "Enthusiasm for Stephen K. Bannon's plans for a fiery Republican revolution had already been fading among some of the

donors and candidates he was relying on to upend the party's establishment. But Mr. Bannon's provocative remarks about President Trump and his family, reported in a new book now scheduled to be released this week, and Mr. Trump's angry response, further alienated some of Mr. Bannon's most important backers - including the family of the hedge fund magnate Robert Mercer - leaving Mr. Bannon confronting the possibility of a dire fate for a publicity-hungry provocateur: political irrelevance. ...

"Mr. Bannon is chairman of Breitbart, and many staff members there believe there is a strong chance he might lose the job, though he was dismissive of that possibility on the site's daily editorial conference call on Thursday night, according to one person with knowledge of the call. ... His associates said he was planning a political nonprofit group called Citizens of the American Republic that would spend between \$25 million and \$30 million - though some advisers predicted a budget as large as \$100 million - to seed the primary campaigns. Half the budget was slated to be spent on voter mobilization efforts on the ground in targeted districts for months leading up to elections, with the other half going toward advertising, according to people familiar with the plan.

"While Mr. Bannon publicly bashed the Republican donor class, he spent months quietly courting some of the deepest pockets on the right. ... The Mercers were upset further when they learned that Mr. Bannon had privately boasted that they would back him if he ran for president, according to one family associate." <http://nyti.ms/2CLmH7a>

-- @elianayjohnson: "Was just told, by person present, that Trump referred to Bannon as 'Bam Bam' after allegations of domestic abuse surfaced against him (Bannon) during the campaign. Trump told ppl: 'Don't worry abt Bam Bam, he's locked away in a room working 20 hrs a day. He never comes out.'"

THE WOLFF BLAME GAME -- "As Trump fumes, White House staff spread blame on Wolff book," by Andrew Restuccia and Matt Nussbaum: "White House staffers are poring over copies of Michael Wolff's forthcoming book, scanning the index for their names and crossing their fingers that they aren't mentioned. ... [T]he book ... is also reviving frustration with other former aides whom the president's close advisers have long suspected of leaking to the press. Former White House deputy chief of staff Katie Walsh, who was quoted in the book saying that managing the president was 'like trying to figure out what a child wants,' is under fire from some in the administration for her apparent role in the book.

"White House aides were so angry that they discussed whether Walsh should step down from her dual roles as a senior adviser to both the [RNC] and the outside pro-Trump group America First, according to an administration official. But Walsh appealed directly to Kushner to deny the comments and then publicly distanced herself from the book, saving her job for now after Kushner instructed other staffers to lay off of her. 'I'm shocked that she went on the record,' another administration official said Thursday. 'It's just unprofessional.'" <http://politi.co/2qoLgRW>

-- **GLAD PLAYBOOK CAN HELP!: "Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House,"**

page 170-171: "By mid-March, Gary Cohn had been drafted into the effort to salvage the faltering health care bill. This might have seemed like a form of hazing for Cohn, whose grasp on legislative matters was even more limited than most in the White House.

"On Friday, March 24, the morning of the theoretical House vote for the Republican health care bill, Politico's Playbook characterized the chances of a vote actually coming to the floor as a 'toss-up.' In that morning's senior staff meeting, Cohn was asked for an assessment of where things stood and promptly said, 'I think it's a toss-up.' 'Really,' thought Katie Walsh. 'That's what you think?'"

2018 WATCH -- "Trump, GOP leaders to discuss 2018 election at Camp David Friday," by Alex Isenstadt: "Congressional leaders are slated to brief President Donald Trump on the perilous midterm landscape on Friday afternoon at Camp David. Amid rising concern that Republicans could lose their majorities in November, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) will lead separate presentations on 2018, according to three people familiar with the plans.

"The briefing will be part of a broader slate of meetings between the president and Republican congressional leadership to take place at Camp David through the weekend, when they are scheduled to discuss the legislative agenda for this year. Also attending will be House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) and Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas)." <http://politi.co/2lZhrCO>

-- "Trump, Romney talk on phone amid speculation over Utah Senate bid," by Alex Isenstadt: "President Donald Trump spoke by phone with Mitt Romney on Thursday evening, a conversation that comes amid mounting speculation that Romney -- a fierce Trump critic -- is preparing to run for Senate in Utah. The brief call, which was described by two sources who were briefed on it, lasted less than 10 minutes. The president wished Romney, the 2012 GOP nominee, best of luck in his future endeavors.

"The two men also spoke about 83-year-old Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch, who announced his retirement earlier this week, opening the seat for Romney to run. Trump had aggressively pressured Hatch to run for reelection in an effort to block Romney from taking the seat." <http://politi.co/2Cu37bs>

-- CONGRESS IS NO FUN, PART 1 MILLION: With the news yesterday that House Administration Chairman Gregg Harper (R-Miss.) would retire, the House is losing six committee chairmen: Harper, Financial Services Chairman Jeb Hensarling of Texas, Budget Chair Diane Black of Tennessee, Judiciary Chairman Bob Goodlatte of Virginia, Science Chairman Lamar Smith of Texas and Transportation Chairman Bill Shuster of Pennsylvania.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN COUNTDOWN -- Spending authority runs dry in two weeks from today.

-- **PROGRESS? NAH -- "Inside the faltering Dreamer talks,"** by Seung Min Kim, Rachael Bade and Ted Hesson: "The White House has not provided details to a bipartisan group of key senators on what border security and immigration restrictions they want in return for helping Dreamers, according to the negotiators, who believe that's a major obstacle.

"And in one potentially ominous sign for a deal, two Senate Republicans who had been in talks with Democrats released an unusually downcast statement about the lack of progress in the private negotiations, which began after Trump announced last fall he would kill the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

"Over the course of the last several weeks, we have negotiated in good faith with Senate Democrats on a DACA agreement,' said GOP Sens. James Lankford of Oklahoma and Thom Tillis of North Carolina in the joint statement. 'Unfortunately, our discussions on border security and enforcement with Democrats are much further apart, and that is key to getting a bipartisan deal on DACA. Until that happens, we cannot accomplish the solutions our country needs and many families deserve.'"

<http://politi.co/2F0twPO>

BEHIND THE SCENES -- "Ryan backed Nunes in spat with Justice Dept. over Russia documents, sources say," by CNN's Laura Jarrett, Evan Perez and Manu Raju: "House Speaker Paul Ryan backed his fellow congressional Republican, House Intelligence Chairman Devin Nunes, during a meeting over the Russia investigation Wednesday, capping off a months-long dispute between the committee and the Justice Department, multiple sources with the knowledge of the situation told CNN. ... Over the summer Nunes served subpoenas seeking a broad range of documents connected to the dossier of compromising allegations about President Donald Trump's connections to the Kremlin ...

"While Ryan had already been in contact with Rosenstein for months about the dispute over documents, Rosenstein and Wray wanted to make one last effort to persuade him to support their position. The documents in dispute were mostly FBI investigative documents that are considered law enforcement sensitive and are rarely released or shared outside the bureau. During the meeting, however, it became clear that Ryan wasn't moved and the officials wouldn't have his support if they proceeded to resist Nunes' remaining highly classified requests. ... A compromise was reached later Wednesday that allows House Intelligence Committee members to go to a Justice Department facility to view the documents." <http://cnn.it/2CKf40U>

-- **"DOJ clash with Trump allies lands on Ryan's doorstep,"** by Kyle Cheney and Rachael Bade. <http://politi.co/2AtYvQZ>

CZECH IT OUT -- PRAGUE DAILY MONITOR: "Paul Ryan may attend Czechoslovak centenary events": "Paul Ryan, speaker of the House of Representatives of the U.S. Congress, might attend some of the events within the

celebrations of the birth of Czechoslovakia centenary this year, Czech lower house chairman Radek Vondracek said after meeting U.S. Ambassador Stephen King on Thursday. ...

"King, the new U.S. ambassador to Prague, is viewed by many as a political patron of Ryan. Both are natives of Janesville, Wisconsin, and both members of the Republican Party who helped each other in election campaigns in the past."
<http://bit.ly/2lYaYHh>

THIS SEEMS LIKE AN OMINOUS SIGN -- "CDC briefing to focus on preparing for nuclear war," by Brianna Ehley: "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has posted a notice touting a Jan. 16 briefing about the work that federal, state and local governments are doing in case of a possible nuclear strike. 'While a nuclear detonation is unlikely, it would have devastating results and there would be limited time to take critical protection steps,' the notice states. 'Despite the fear surrounding such an event, planning and preparation can lessen deaths and illness.'" <http://politi.co/2qsyodt>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "In small breakthrough, Koreas will meet for talks on Tuesday," by AP's Hyung-Jin Kim in Seoul: "The rival Koreas will sit down for their first formal talks in more than two years next week to find ways to cooperate on the Winter Olympics in the South and to improve their abysmal ties, Seoul officials said Friday. While a positive sign after last year's threats of nuclear war, the Koreas have a long history of failing to move past their deep animosity.

"The announcement came hours after the United States said it will delay annual military exercises with South Korea until after the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, next month. The exercises infuriate North Korea, which claims they are an invasion rehearsal, although South Korea and the United States have repeatedly said they are defensive in nature." <http://bit.ly/2m2cLvJ>

DEPT. OF RESOLUTIONS -- "Mark Zuckerberg Resolves to 'Fix' Facebook in 2018: Chief executive has set annual personal challenge since 2009; in post, says company 'has made too many errors,'" by WSJ's Deepa Seetharaman: "In a Facebook post Thursday that highlights his company's mounting difficulties, Mr. Zuckerberg said the social network has made 'too many errors enforcing our policies and preventing misuse of our tools.' The Facebook chief executive, a self-described optimist about technology, said promising tools such as encryption and cryptocurrency could help counter concerns about the growing power of technology giants, but added that they, too, carried risks that needed to be deliberated.

"The world feels anxious and divided, and Facebook has a lot of work to do -- whether it's protecting our community from abuse and hate, defending against interference by nation states, or making sure that time spent on Facebook is time well spent,' he wrote. 'My personal challenge for 2018 is to focus on fixing these important issues.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2lYiTEv> ... **His post** <http://bit.ly/2CU5DJ7>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: People look out over the National Mall from the Lincoln Memorial during a snow storm in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 4. A giant winter "bomb cyclone" walloped the East Coast with freezing cold and heavy snow, forcing thousands of flight cancellations and widespread school closures. | Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images

JOE SCARBOROUGH in WaPo, "I asked Trump a blunt question: Do you read?":

"Mika Brzezinski and I had a tense meeting with Trump following what I considered to be a bumbling debate performance in September 2015. I asked the candidate a blunt question. 'Can you read?' Awkward silence. 'I'm serious, Donald. Do you read?' I continued. 'If someone wrote you a one-page paper on a policy, could you read it?' Taken aback, Trump quietly responded that he could while holding up a Bible given to him by his mother. He then joked that he read it all the time." <http://wapo.st/2AuNDSY>

CNN'S MANU RAJU and JEREMY HERB: "In shift, Democrats try to keep Sessions as attorney general": "Last year, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer was blunt in his assessment of Jeff Sessions: 'For the good of the country, Attorney General Sessions should resign.'

"Now, Schumer and other Democrats have changed their tune, suggesting Sessions should stay in the job as long as special counsel Robert Mueller is investigating collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign. 'I voted against Jeff Sessions and said he never should be there in the first place, given his record on civil rights, on immigration, on so many other issues,' Schumer said Thursday in the Capitol. 'My view now is very simple: nothing, nothing should ever interfere with the Mueller investigation.'" <http://cnn.it/2Av3DnY>

MORE LAWSUITS -- "Woman who accused Roy Moore of unwanted sexual contact sues him for defamation," by WaPo's Beth Reinhard: "In a lawsuit that echoes a civil case against President Trump, an Alabama woman on Thursday sued failed U.S. Senate candidate Roy Moore and his campaign for defamation, citing harsh personal attacks she faced after coming forward with allegations that he touched her sexually when she was 14 years old. Leigh Corfman is not seeking financial compensation beyond legal costs, said her attorney, Neil Roman. She is asking for a declaratory judgment of defamation, a public apology from Moore, and a court-enforced ban on him or his campaign publicly attacking her again." <http://wapo.st/2Ebrewd>

TRUMP ABROAD -- "Trump administration to withhold aid to Pakistan," by Cristiano Lima: "The Trump administration announced it will withhold most of its security aid to Pakistan on Thursday, dealing a blow to a government the White House has sharply criticized for being too soft on terrorism. State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert announced the freeze in securities assistance at a briefing on Thursday, citing the country's record on terrorist organizations as the impetus behind the change.

'Now, the money that has been suspended at this time does not mean that it will be suspended forever. Pakistan has the ability to get this money back, if you will, in the future, but they have to take decisive action,' Nauert said.

"Nauert declined to provide specifics on the monetary extent of the aid to be withheld, but said it will continue 'until the Pakistani Government takes decisive action against groups' that are 'destabilizing the region and also targeting U.S. personnel.' The bulk of the cuts are expected to target the Coalition Support Funds for Pakistan, the vehicle used by the Pentagon to boost counter-terrorism efforts in the country, according to the State Department." <http://politi.co/2EaOD0P>

***** **A message from Better Medicare Alliance: CONGRESS HAS UNFINISHED BUSINESS TO PROTECT MEDICARE ADVANTAGE SENIORS:** 19 million seniors and people with disabilities choose Medicare Advantage for one reason: it gives them the flexible, affordable, and robust health care they need. And with health needs in this country becoming more complex, it's clear that innovative, integrated solutions are required.

Better Medicare Alliance urges Congress to act quickly to enhance care for Medicare beneficiaries by approving the CHRONIC Care Act providing enhanced flexibility in supplemental benefit designs for high-cost, high-need beneficiaries and permanently reauthorization of Special Needs Plans (SNPs). And, Congress should vote to delay the Health Insurance Tax (HIT) to protect Medicare Advantage beneficiaries from unaffordable premium hikes.

Enrollment in Medicare Advantage and consumer satisfaction is growing. There is more evidence that Medicare Advantage is improving outcomes and leading efforts to implement innovations in delivery of care. Learn more: <http://bettermedicarealliance.org>

VALLEY TALK - "Uber Co-Founder Kalanick Plans to Sell 29% of His Shares in Company," by WSJ's Douglas MacMillan: Travis "Kalanick, who was pushed out from his role as Uber's chief executive last year but remains on the board, plans to sell the stake of about \$1.4 billion in the tender offer for Uber shares by a SoftBank-led consortium ... The deal provides the first opportunity for Mr. Kalanick, long a billionaire on paper, to cash out a portion of his stake in the company, at a time when he has withdrawn from the day-to-day operations of the company." <http://on.wsj.com/2AuYqfF>

MEDIAWATCH -- Megan Murphy (@meganmurp): "I have stepped down as editor of Bloomberg Businessweek (heart breaks). Juggling being the parent I want to be with the demands of this fantastic, amazing magazine has taken its toll. (For those who've wondered why I always seem to be in London!)" **Joel Weber**, the editor of Bloomberg Markets magazine, is replacing Murphy's. Bloomberg named **Christine Harper** editor of Bloomberg Markets.

-- **BUZZFEED** named **Tarini Parti** their new White House correspondent. She

previously covered Congress. Adrian Carrasquillo was previously fired for inappropriate comments. <http://read.bi/2CwZO3a>

-- **TV TODAY:** CNN's Elise Labott is sitting down with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson today for an interview that will air on CNN this afternoon.

Playbookers

SUNDAY SO FAR - CBS' "Face the Nation": CIA Director Mike Pompeo ... Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) ... former Mississippi Gov. and RNC Chairman Haley Barbour ... Michael Morell and Tom Donilon. Panel: Mike Allen, Molly Ball, Jeffrey Goldberg, and Ramesh Ponnuru

--**"Fox News Sunday":** CIA Director Mike Pompeo ... Corey Lewandowski ... Panel: Karl Rove, Julie Pace, Guy Benson, Rachael Bade. Power Player: Dr. Jerome Adams, United States Surgeon General

--**NBC's "Meet the Press":** Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) ... Michael Wolff. Panel: David Brooks, Mark Leibovich, Danielle Pletka and Joy Reid

--**ABC's "This Week":** Matt Dowd, Stephanie Cutter, Sara Fagen, Roland Martin, Matt Schlapp

--**CNN's "State of the Union":** Panel: Van Jones, Amanda Carpenter, Jen Psaki and Michael Caputo

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** (guest host: Nia-Malika Henderson): Josh Green, Seung Min Kim, Jeff Zeleny and Mary Katharine Ham

SPOTTED: Sen. Tina Smith (D-Minn.) and her husband Archie last night at Centrolina in City Center ... former Arizona State football coach Todd Graham walking across Lafayette Square yesterday morning with his family.

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- HASTI AFKHAMI is joining Subject Matter as a senior vice president of digital. She most recently was at Podesta Group as a SVP and head of digital.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Brett McGurk, Special Presidential Envoy to Counter ISIS at the State Department, and **Gina Chon**, Washington columnist at Reuters Breakingviews and a WSJ and FT alum, on Thursday welcomed Leia Mi-hee Chon McGurk, who arrived at 3:17 p.m. weighing 6 pounds, 18 inches. **Pic** <http://politi.co/2CKjB3q>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Edelman's Daria Baxter

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: former Rep. Tom Davis (R-Va.), now director of federal government affairs at Deloitte and No Labels co-founder, is 69. **How he got his start in politics:** "I started in politics by giving a speech for Nixon in 1960 at my elementary school. Then I served as a page for 4 years in the U.S. Senate (1963-1967) sponsored by Sen. Carl Curtis and Sen. Roman Hruska from Nebraska. Then to Amherst College where my classmate David Eisenhower got me a job with Harry Dent, the political director at the White House. Then the Army, UVA Law and then elected to Fairfax County Board at 29." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2CYwG6g>

BIRTHDAYS: David Simas, CEO of the Obama Foundation, is 48 ... former CIA Director George Tenet is 65 ... former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell is 74 ... former Vice President Walter Mondale is 9-0 ... The Hill's John Solomon is 51 ... Katie Lillie, chief of staff at the Paul G. Allen Frontiers Group in Seattle, former Obama WH director of press advance and long time Manchester United fan (hat tip: Ben Chang) ... DOJ alum Allison Price ... WSJ's Nick Timiraos ... Nick Lanyi ... Danielle Melfi ... Shab Sharbatoghlie ... AP's David Bauder ... Ally Flinn ... Mimi Mager of Mager & Associates ... Kristen Grimm, president of Spitfire Strategies ... Alexis Bataillon, managing director of corporate responsibility at JPMorgan Chase (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Sruti Ramadugu, MBA candidate at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan (h/t Allison Bormel) ... Mark Hancock ... former Rep. Nancy Johnson (R-Ct.) is 83 ... former Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-N.Y.) is 74 ... Rep. Rodney Davis (R-Ill.) is 48 ... Ohio Attorney General and former U.S. Sen. Mike DeWine is 71 (h/t Kristin Strobel) ... Mercury's Jake Dilemani ...

... **Josh Galper** is 46 (h/t Eleanor McManus) ... Christine Hall, director of comms at Competitive Enterprise Institute ... Bush alum Carrie Underwood ... Richard Harris ... Ariella Lehrer, president of HitPoint Studios and CEO of Legacy Games, is 65 (h/t Jewish Insider) ... Jeff Hauser, project manager at the Revolving Door Project at the Center for Economic and Policy Research (h/t Anthony DeAngelo) ... Time's Nash Jenkins ... Google's Tom Youngblood ... Val Mack ... Piper White Baker ... Karen Gray Houston ... Thomas Suddes ... Daniel Sieberg ... John Drogin ... Majid Siddiqui ... Shelley Adler ... Jessie Torres Perkins ... Veronica Vaquer ... Sharon Scates ... John Reid ... Aaron Dowd ... Lara Bergthold ... Patrick Ottenhoff ... Joe Wineke ... Sara Wisgerhof Throener ... Kevin Ronnie ... Thad Nation ... Juan Carlos, former King of Spain, is 8-0 ... Dalit Toledano ... Peter O'Keefe ... David Katz (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Better Medicare Alliance:** Medicare Advantage is building the future of health care. Through research, policy development and advocacy, BMA is a community of experts that works to ensure public policies that enable Medicare Advantage to offer innovative, modern health care to seniors and those with disabilities eligible for Medicare. <http://bettermedicarealliance.org> *****

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To: Freire, JP[Freire.JP@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]
Cc: Hale, Michelle[hale.michelle@epa.gov]
From: Konkus, John
Sent: Fri 4/28/2017 4:21:14 PM
Subject: Radio Interview Today
2017-04-25 DRAFT WH 100 days talkers.docx
Interview Today.docx

Team: Michelle is currently checking with the Administrator and his schedule to see if he wants to and can do this SiriusXM interview today per the WH's request. Attached is background on the interview and the talking points from earlier in the week. Let me know if there are updated and/or new points we want to give him to review in advance.

If this comes to fruition, I'll send around a calendar invite per usual.

Thank you!

John Konkus

Environmental Protection Agency

Deputy Associate Administrator for Public Affairs

Mobile: (202) 365-9250

To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 10/18/2017 8:25:24 PM
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

Thank you very much!

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2017 4:24 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

We are just finishing the statement of work with the contracting office and then they have to advertise it for 5 days to justify "sole sourcing"

this to Definers, due to the high \$ value of the contract, to make sure another vendor doesn't say they can do the same thing.

Thx ng

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 18, 2017, at 4:13 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Guys we've been working on this since June. I don't know if the problem is with Definers or EPA but let's get this done, asap. No more delays.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 6:27 PM
To: Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

Great. Adding Nancy and Liz.

On Sep 28, 2017, at 4:11 PM, Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com> wrote:

We're fully registered...

<Screen Shot 2017-09-28 at 4.23.59 PM.png>

On Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 3:29 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

HI –

Working with contracts on this – here is the remaining issue that the contracting officer brought to me yesterday --

Specifically, the vendor is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). In order for any vendor to receive a contract from the federal government, they must be registered in this system. The vendor seems to be reluctant to register.

George had been working with the vendor on this. I have a call into the vendor as they may need assistance in completing the forms.

Will update you as soon as I hear from the vendor.

Thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:02 PM

To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>

Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Definers -- Clips

Importance: High

Where are we on this and when can we get this going? Today is a day where we could really use their help capturing clips in real time. This is very important and our wait and the process to do this has been way too long. Thank you!

Jahan Wilcox

EPA

Strategic Communications Advisor

Work Cell: 202.309.0934

Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definerscorp.com

571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Sat 12/2/2017 2:13:31 AM
Subject: DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2017, THROUGH SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2017

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 2017

**DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2017, THROUGH SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2017**

Saturday's (December 2, 2017) In-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: CNN

Print: Hearst Newspapers

Radio: Talk Media News

Saturday's (December 2, 2017) Out-of-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: CNN

Print: AFP

Radio: Washington Post

Sunday's (December 3, 2017) In-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: FOX

Print: The Hill

Radio: VOA

EST

7:30AM Out-of-Town Travel Pool Call Time

Joint Base Andrews

Virginia Gate

8:00AM In-Town Travel Pool Call Time

**8:40AM THE PRESIDENT departs the White House en route to Joint Base
Andrews**

South Lawn

Open Press

9:00AM THE PRESIDENT departs Washington, D.C. en route to New York, NY

Joint Base Andrews

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

9:55AM THE PRESIDENT arrives in New York, NY

John F. Kennedy International Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

10:05AM THE PRESIDENT departs John F. Kennedy International Airport en route to the Wall Street Landing Zone

John F. Kennedy International Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

10:25AM THE PRESIDENT arrives at the Wall Street Landing Zone

Wall Street Landing Zone

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

**11:20AM THE PRESIDENT delivers remarks at a Trump victory finance
breakfast**

New York, NY

Out-of-Town Travel Pool Spray

**12:35PM THE PRESIDENT delivers remarks at a Republican National
Committee (RNC) holiday in Manhattan lunch**

New York, NY

Closed Press

1:50PM THE PRESIDENT participates in a roundtable with RNC supporters

New York, NY

Closed Press

**3:00PM THE PRESIDENT departs the Wall Street Landing Zone en route to
John F. Kennedy International Airport**

Wall Street Landing Zone

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

**3:30PM THE PRESIDENT departs New York, NY en route to Washington,
D.C.**

John F. Kennedy International Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

4:25PM THE PRESIDENT arrives in Washington, D.C.

Joint Base Andrews

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

4:45PM THE PRESIDENT arrives at the White House

South Lawn

Open Press

Sunday, December 3, 2017

EST

TBD In-Town Travel Pool Call Time

No public events scheduled

###

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Fimrite, Peter
Sent: Fri 2/9/2018 5:58:23 PM
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfnchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed

the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every employee, to EPA’s Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words “climate change” were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **“Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focused on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the

culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **“Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **“No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **“We don’t discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9 Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: @pfimrite